Find what you want on the Web

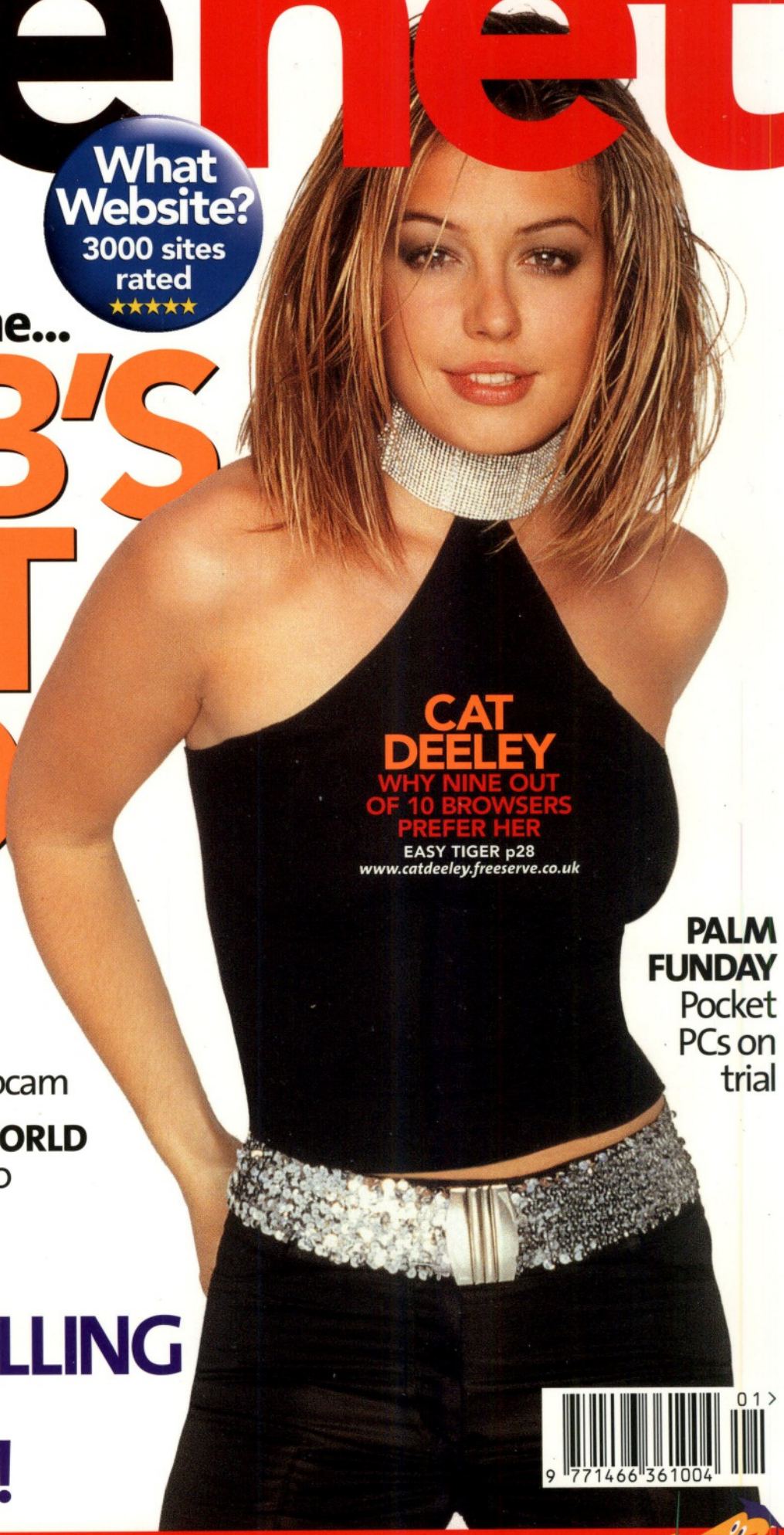
the net

JANUARY 2000 £1.99

What Website? 3000 sites rated ★★★★★

From stores to stars, we name the...

WEB'S HOT 100



CAT DEELEY
WHY NINE OUT OF 10 BROWSERS PREFER HER
EASY TIGER p28
www.catdeeley.freeserve.co.uk

YOU CAN BANK ON IT
Move your money with your modem

YOU LOOKING AT ME?
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ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD
Surf through the last 1000 years in just four pages

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Pocket PCs on trial

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9 771466 361004 01

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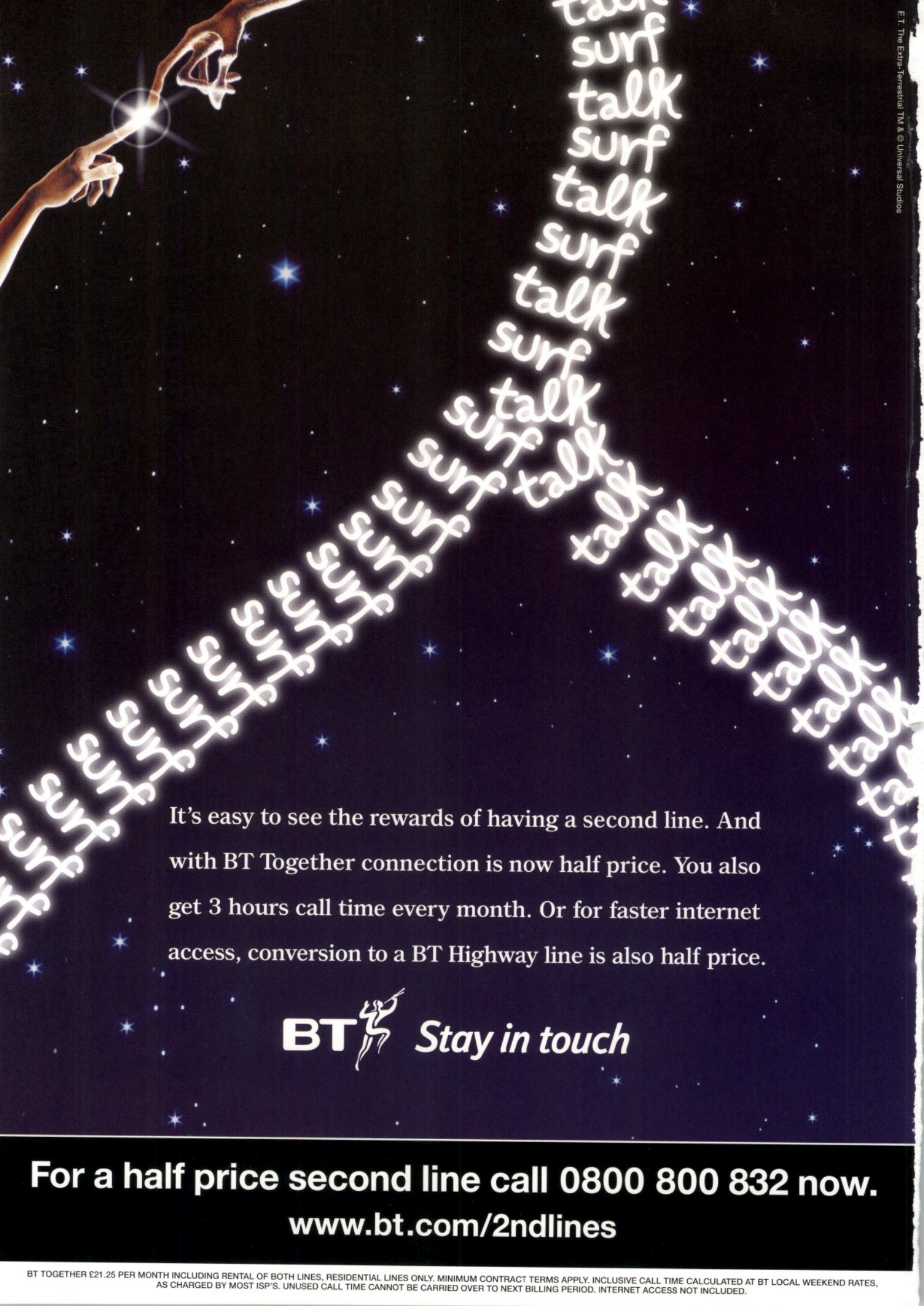
surf
talk
It's easy to see the rewards of having a second line. And with BT Together connection is now half price. You also get 3 hours call time every month. Or for faster internet access, conversion to a BT Highway line is also half price.
BT Stay in touch
For a half price second line call 0800 800 832 now.
www.bt.com/2ndlines
BT TOGETHER £21.25 PER MONTH INCLUDING RENTAL OF BOTH LINES, RESIDENTIAL LINES ONLY. MINIMUM CONTRACT TERMS APPLY. INCLUSIVE CALL TIME CALCULATED AT BT LOCAL WEEKEND RATES, AS CHARGED BY MOST ISP'S. UNUSED CALL TIME CANNOT BE CARRIED OVER TO NEXT BILLING PERIOD. INTERNET ACCESS NOT INCLUDED.
E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial TM & © Universal Studios

the net

Flick before you click

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH: BARRY HOLLYWOOD/OUTLINE

'Hooligans can now be spotted by their pagers, mobiles...'

Nothing ages faster than the image of a football hooligan. In the Seventies, no winter weekend slipped by without a TV documentary's worth of denim-clad urchins hurling punches at each other, then ducking away from a vicious wing collar or flying tam'o'shanter. Ten years later, the streets around the nation's football stadia were cluttered with hard-eyed young men sporting canary yellow Pringles and neatly-combed 'taches.

And in the late Nineties, they can be spotted by their pagers, mobiles... and Internet connections. As our feature (p36) explains, the nutters and cutters – tired of dodgy boozers and Football Specials – are choosing to meet up on Web sites instead. It's the sort of news that sends politicians into spitting rages, calling for restricted access to the Internet and sending out dire warnings about the pitfalls of encryption. But the simple truth is, the thugs are going to use whatever means available to plan their violence, and if one Web site is shut down then a new one springs up overnight to take its place.

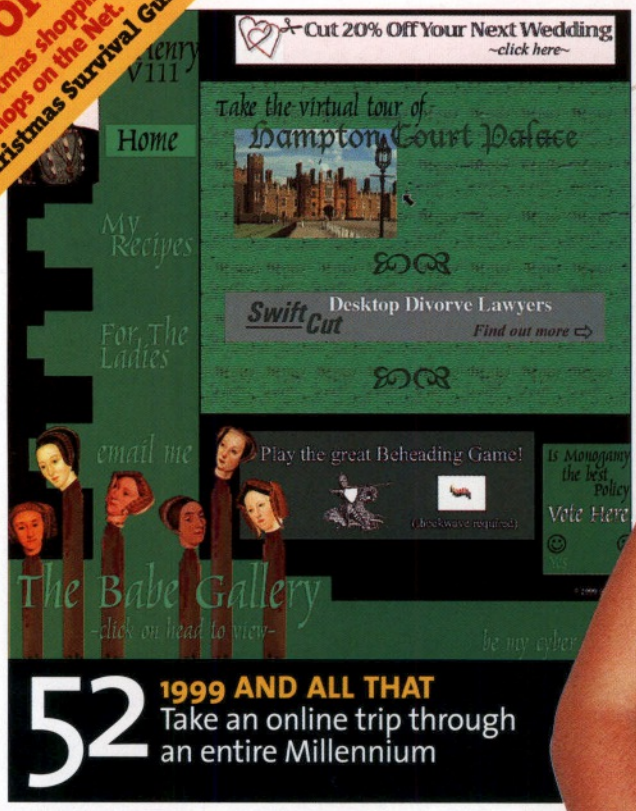
Of course, for every individual hiding online, there are a dozen doing the opposite – laying bare their lives via Webcams. If you want to join them, turn to our Step-by-Step guide. It's got to be more fun than giving someone a kicking because of the colour of their scarf.

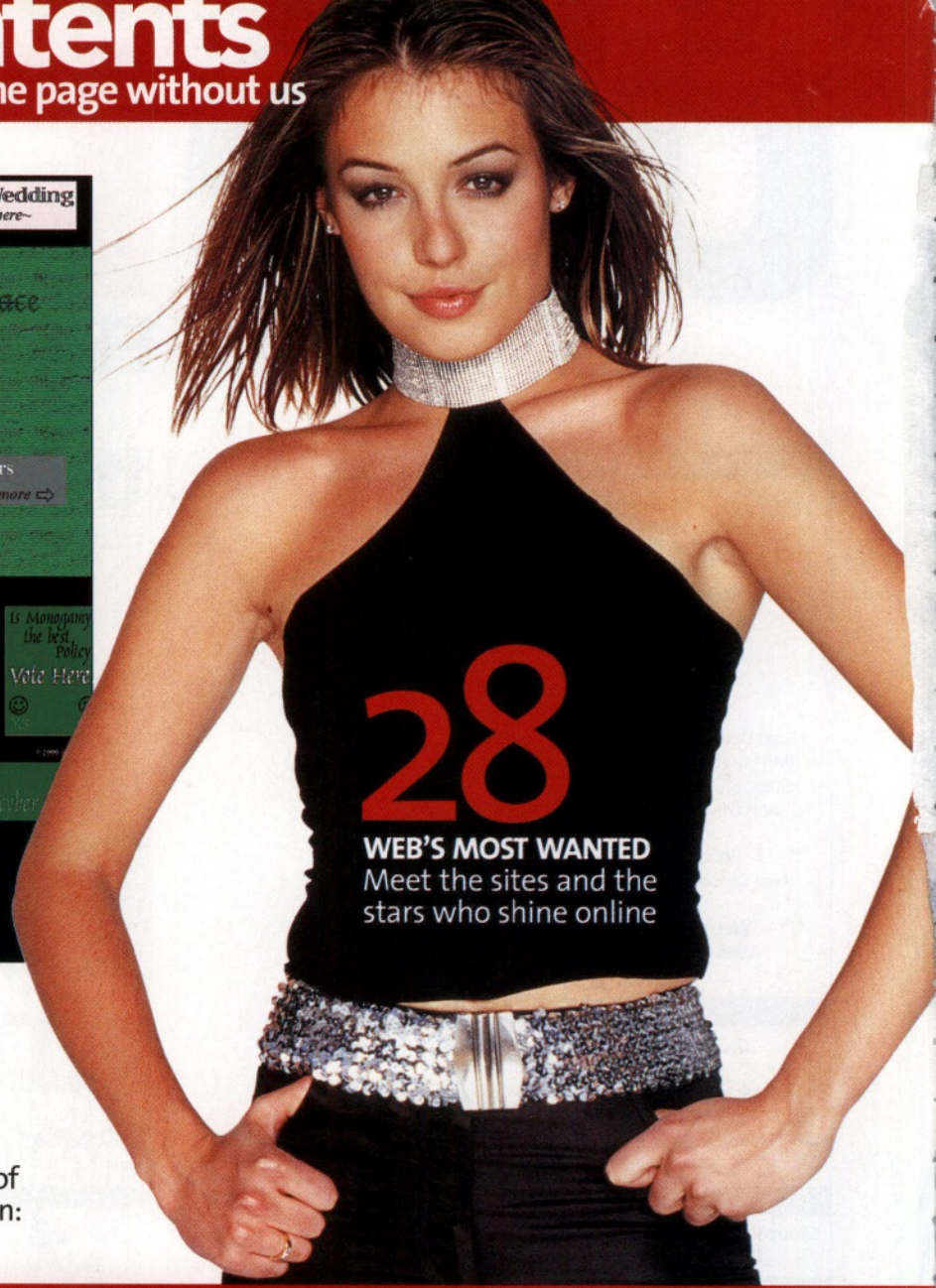
Matthew Bingham, **Editor**
matthew.bingham@haynet.com

thenetcontents

Don't leave your home page without us

Up to £500 OFF your Christmas shopping with Shops on the Net. See our Christmas Survival Guide





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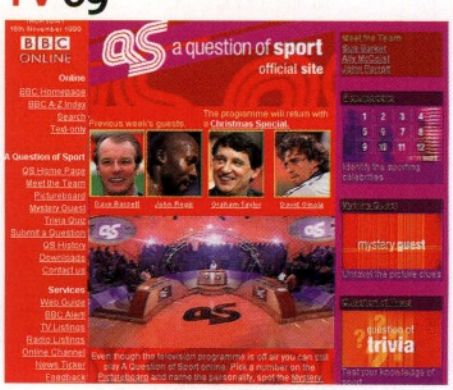

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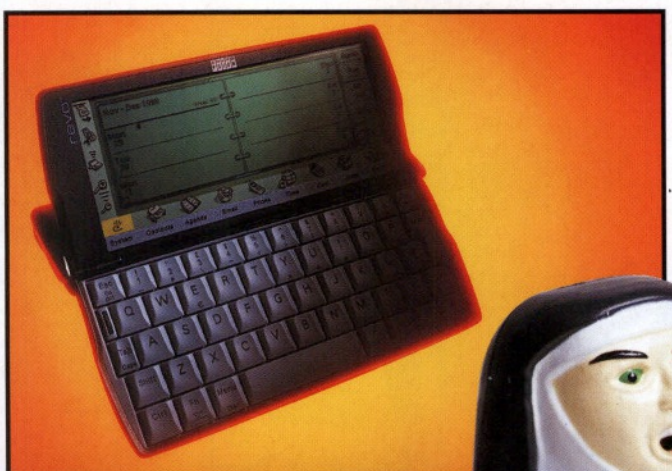

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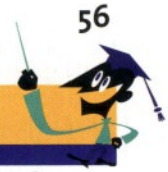

stepbystep

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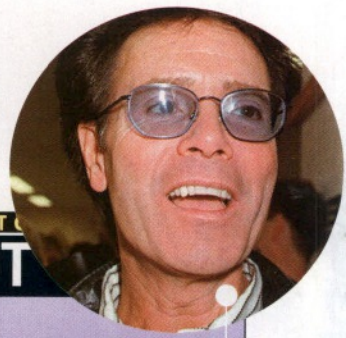


It's a free for all!

NET ACCESS Free Net access is becoming a reality

The dream of completely free, unmetered Internet access is becoming a reality. CallNeto800 (***www.callneto800.com***) is now offering free, unrestricted Net access and free phone calls to the Net.

No spade could harm Iron Worm

The question is whether the company can deliver. It has already had to close the sign-up phone line when it became overwhelmed, so how will it cope with all the calls to the Net? Nearly every company to have made this type of offer has encountered severe problems coping with demand.

Screaming.net (***www.screaming.net***) offered free off-peak calls to the Net when it launched in April. The service came in for criticism, although Managing Director Jeremy Stokes says the service is now reliable.

Strayduck (***www.strayduck.com***) announced it would be offering its users free calls every third week. The amount of free time you get is an average of your time spent online in the previous two.

Can these new services overcome teething problems and deliver? That should become clear in the next few months. We might spend the time cursing, but we're going in the right direction.

WHAT'S HOT AND WHAT'S NOT

IN & OUT

PRESENTS	SOCKS
www.christmas.co.uk	*www.joyofsocks.com*
WHITE CHRISTMAS	HANDKNITTED JUMPERS
www.met-office.gov.uk	*www.ausitrade.com/iceland/*
OFFICE PARTIES	HANDKERCHIEFS
www.mistletoemagic.com	*www.hankiesandthings.com*
CHRISTMAS NUMBER ONE	CLIFF RICHARD
www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/pop/top_charts.shtml	*www.starnet.com.au/sheppard/2cliff.html*
FAIRY LIGHTS	LEFTOVER TURKEY
www.tackychristmas.com	*www.butterball.com*

Sadly, this was taken last week

BUGS

Y2K – BELIEVE THE HYPE

You might think that all the talk about Y2K bugs is just hype and that nothing's really going to happen. You may even be right. But when you're assessing whether you should be worried or not it's worth looking at the people in the know to see whether *they* are worried or not. So, without trying to scare you, it brings us absolutely no pleasure at all to tell you that Russian and US military personnel have agreed to spend New Year's Eve together in NORAD Missile Command, Colorado, to prevent both sides from thinking the other has launched nuclear missiles. The good news is that the Russians are 'somewhat prepared' for preventing mayhem on New Year's Day. We hope that's put your mind at rest.

Postcards: dull

Tatchell's Fusiliers prepared for battle

'Come on in, Mr Yeltsin'

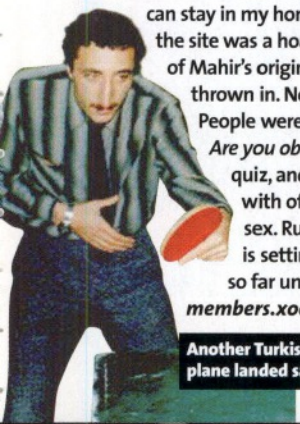
TALKING TURKEY

IT COULD ONLY HAPPEN ON THE NET

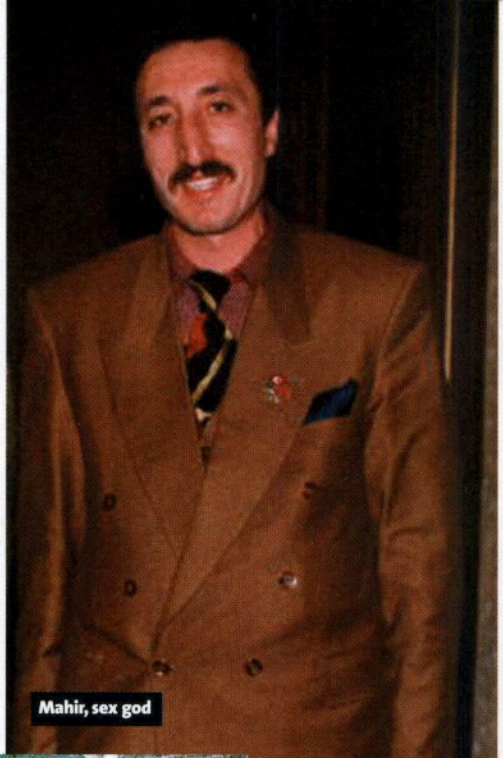
If it's true that everyone will have 15 minutes of fame then Mahir Cagri is probably taking up more than his fair share. The Turkish journalist has become an overnight worldwide celebrity – all because of the Net.

The email grapevine went into overdrive as people logged on to his site, which listed his hobbies: 'I like sex' and 'I like to take foto-camera...nice nude models'. Then came an offer to the ladies of the world. 'Who is want to come TURKEY I can invitate,' it read, before adding: 'She can stay in my home...'. Then came the bombshell – the site was a hoax. The site was in fact a parody of Mahir's original with a few sexual innuendoes thrown in. Not that anyone cared by then. People were playing Mahir PacMan and the *Are you obsessed with Mahir?* quiz, and he's been inundated with offers of marriage and sex. Rumours that Gail Porter is setting up a similar site are so far unfounded.

members.xoom.com/_XOOM/primall/mahir/index.html



Another Turkish plane landed safely



Mahir, sex god

KNOWHOW

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT...?
No.6: Cookies

Presumably we're not talking about nice homebaked biscuits like Mum used to make?

No (although if that's what you're after check out ***mcgraws-shortbread.com***). A cookie is a piece of information sent from a Web site and stored on your hard drive.

What's the point of it?

The cookie is a file that contains various pieces of information, such as the parts of the site you visited, usernames, passwords and even credit card numbers. This means that when you return to the site it will remember your details and save you the time of having to input them again.

What sort of sites are helped by the use of cookies?

Any site that requires a username and password, such as online newspapers or Web-based emails. When you visit a shopping site it may remember your profile and save you having to send your credit card over the Internet more than once.

So are they a good thing to have, then?

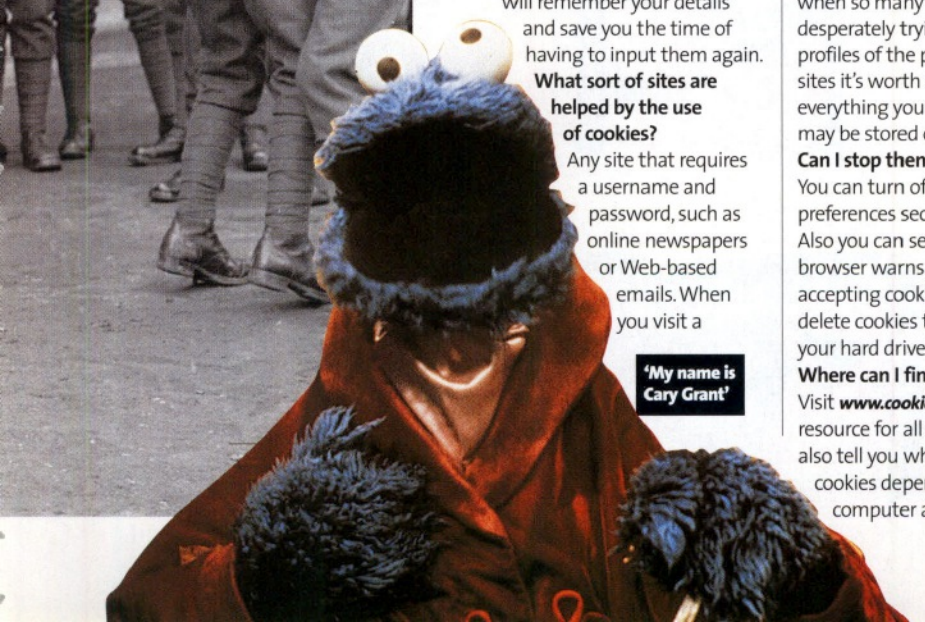
Well, that depends on whether you think Big Brother is watching you. When cookies first came out they were greeted with dismay by privacy groups because they were deposited on your hard drive without you knowing. Now you have more control over cookies, but in an age when so many companies are desperately trying to compile profiles of the people who use their sites it's worth remembering that everything you type into a Web site may be stored on a cookie.

Can I stop them?

You can turn off cookies within the preferences section of your browser. Also you can set it so that your browser warns you when you are accepting cookies. You can also delete cookies that are already on your hard drive if you want to.

Where can I find out more?

Visit ***www.cookiecentral.com***, a huge resource for all things cookies. It will also tell you where to find your cookies depending on which computer and browser you use.

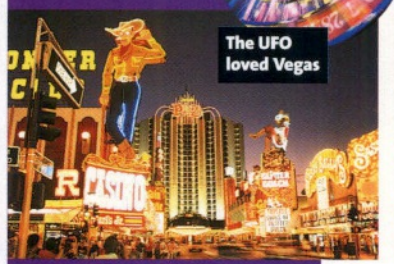


'My name is Cary Grant'

News Bytes
BITS IN BRIEF

ALL BETS ARE OFF

A Californian woman has had a $70,000 gambling debt wiped out by two leading credit card companies. She was sued by the companies for the money and countersued, claiming that it was their fault for allowing her to run up the debt in the first place. She eventually walked away from the debt when it transpired that gambling on the Net is illegal in California.



The UFO loved Vegas

VIRTUAL PETS

If owning your own pet is too much hassle in the hectic new millennium, why not adopt a virtual pet? You can choose from six different pets ranging in appearance from alienesque creatures to robots who make pleas such as 'I want feeding' or 'I want a hug'. If looked after properly the pets will grow and mature.

Leisuredistrict.net

Remember, a pet is for Christmas, not for life

NET BREAKDOWNS

The RAC has started a new Internet-based pay-as-you-go breakdown service. The service will cost £1 a month with a flat fee of £49 if your car breaks down. Customers can sign up on the Internet at *www.redrac.com*.

'Another delivery, Mr Daley'

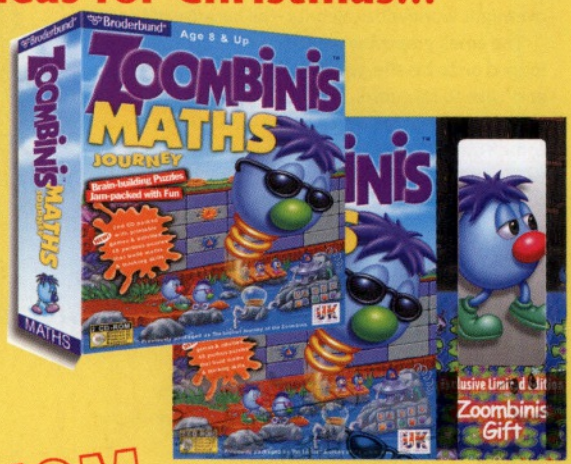
CYBER ETHICS

Medical Web sites are working towards ethical guidelines. Initiatives at *www.drkoop.com* and *www.medscape.com* hope to ensure that information is safe.

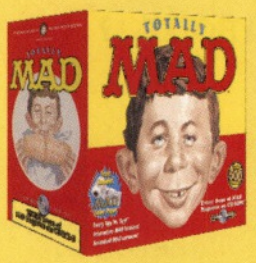
PICTURES: RETNA, REX

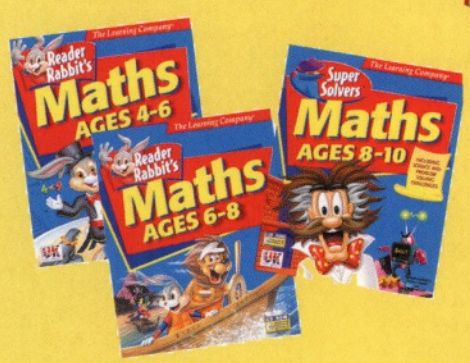
IdeasforChristmas.com

For late shoppers, here's some ideas for Christmas...



IDEASFORCHRISTMAS.COM





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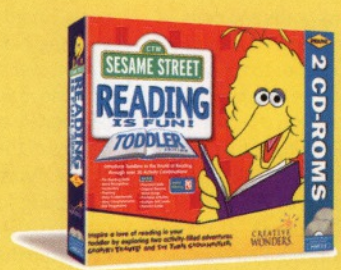

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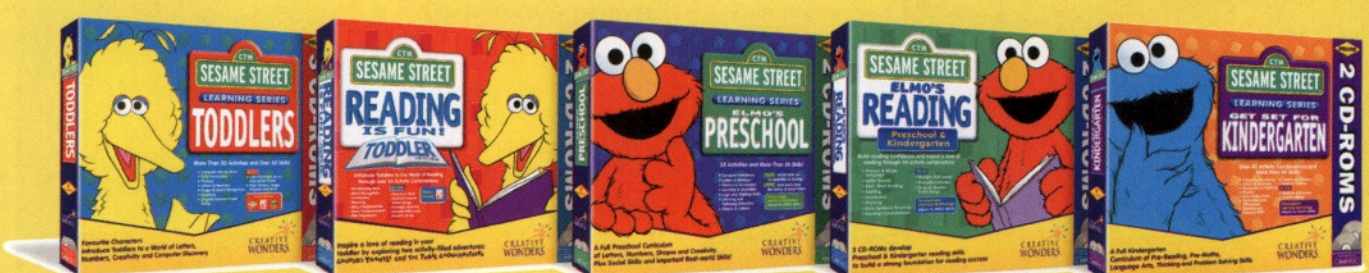

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Celebrity bookmarks

No6 Santa Claus

Santa Sleigh

www.sun-sentinel.com/graphics/entertainment/santadcr.htm

Delivering the world's presents in one night needs speed; maybe he should use this jet-powered sleigh.

Reindeer Owners & Breeders Association

www.cybercervus.com//assoc/roba.htm

Rudolph and his mates can't last forever; Santa will be able to pick up some replacements if he's in contact with this lot.

Slim-Fast

www.slimfast.com

He's not exactly a lithe figure, so as Christmas comes nearer Santa will need to slim down, or he'll never get down all those chimneys and still have room for the odd mince pie.

SantaClausSuits.com

www.santaclaussuits.com

Until Ralph Lauren creates something more stylish, he can get his suits here.

Santa Claus Tracker

www.claus.com /no_peeking/tracker.shtml

Santa will probably get so drunk on sherry that he won't know where he is. This site will jog his memory a little bit.

SPOKEN WORD

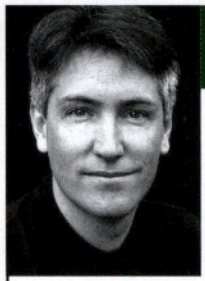
LOOK WHO'S TALKING...

Top quotes from celebrity Net chats

'I feel it was a classic record in the same way as *Be My Baby*, or *River Deep Mountain High*.' *Holly Johnson reminisces about Relax on AOL. Of course, the other two differed in that they weren't banned from radio.*

'One really embarrassing moment was when I had to dress up in a Habitat light shade and I had to say "I am the sun, here are my rays"'. *Gail Porter reveals that there are actually things she won't do for money, but no-one has quite discovered what they are yet, at www.beeb.com.*

'I think the Spice Girls are like plutonium. They'll be with us for millions of years.' *Dan from Semisonic has a thought that's enough to scare anyone at www.beeb.com*



JON CASIMIR

WORLD SURFING CHAMPION

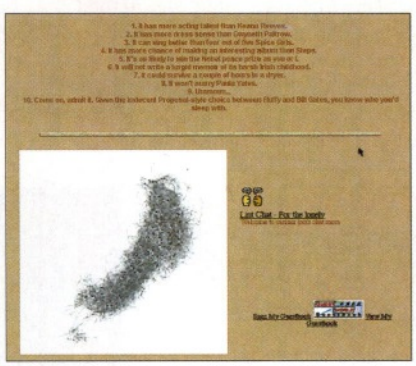
Rebelling against shopping sites across the Internet

It recently occurred to me that there is now so much corporate guff on the Web, so much big business greed, that it has become the sacred duty of everyday Netizens to counteract it. No matter how banal or idiotic our sites, they must be better than another online shopping mall. Shortly after this epiphany, I discovered the Tripod HomePage Studio (***www.tripod.com/build/***), a free site-building service so simple that even someone as clueless as me couldn't muck it up. It's also quick – a site can be stitched together in about the length of a TV ad break, which, coincidentally, is exactly my attention span.

Bugger it, I thought. As a dedicated professional, I should be prepared to give up, oh, ten minutes of my time for readers of *the net* (hey, you only gave me two to write this). But what would my site be about? Gazing navel-ward for inspiration, I found my answer. I would build a virtual shrine to the piece of grey fluff that had somehow made its home in my belly button. It doesn't get less e-commercey than that.

Step one: register as a page builder. Step two: choose a title (Hmmm, how about 'Linternet'?). Three: choose a page style (much like picking curtains). Four: put some text in. Damn! Not everything is multiple choice. I thought for a while (well, about

So I decided to build a shrine to the grey fluff in my belly button



30 seconds, actually) and this is what I wrote: 'What's so special about this piece of lint?

1. It has more acting talent than Keanu Reeves.
2. It has more chance of making an interesting album than Steps.
3. It's as likely to win the Nobel peace prize as you or I.
4. It could survive a couple of hours in a dryer.
5. Given the *Indecent Proposal*-style choice between Fluffy and the world's richest man, you know who you'd sleep with.'

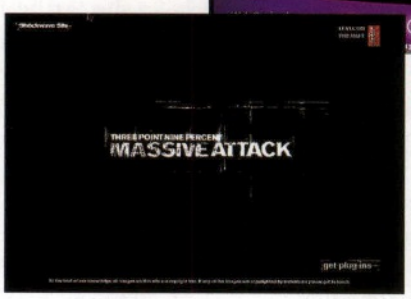
Then I had to upload the fluff picture, add some links and a guestbook (all straightforward and easy) and hit the 'Done' button. Voila! There it was: ***casimir.jon.tripod.com/linternet.html***. Guaranteed stupid, but still more interesting than anything that Microsoft has launched this year.

All that was left was to bring the world's attention to my endeavours. The site suggested I email my friends and enlighten them. But my friends, I realised, have not done enough for me lately. You people, on the other hand...

SITE WATCH

NEW AND APPROVED

A quick round-up of the best new sites on the Web



AGONY UNCLE
www.agony-uncle.com
Counselling isn't cheap and at times you just want to tell your problems to someone anonymous rather than confiding in loved ones. That's where Agony Uncle comes in. Email your problems and they'll email you back with some advice. Bizarre, but it might work for some people.

NIGHT-OUT
www.night-out.co.uk
You can't beat a good night out but it can be hard work arranging it – where to go, what to wear, where to meet... which kebab place to go to later. Night-Out will help with its list of 2,000 clubs around the country and a magazine to keep you on the ball.

MOVIETRAK
www.movietrak.com
No more popping down the video shop in the pouring rain thanks to this lot. It will have a choice of over 500 DVDs for rental at £2.99 a go. Order the DVD online and it's posted first class. Send it back seven days later in the prepaid addressed envelope.

MASSIVE ATTACK
www.massive attack.co.uk
Suitably funky site from the Bristolian band that brought us *Blue Lines*, *Protection* and *Mezzanine*. Catch up with some recent interviews with the band members, watch video footage of their recent tour and enter the bizarre and bonkers world of the 3D Human Unit.

LIV4NOW
www.liv4now.com
A lifestyle community site with a variety of chat rooms, bulletin boards and polls to take part in. The site is aimed at people who want to 'live for now', whatever that means. Advice on earning and spending money.

COMPLAINDOMAIN
www.complain domain.com
While some people will be happily playing with their new Christmas presents on 25 December, others – apparently – will not be pleased with their gifts and want to take them back to the shops. Complaindomain launches on Christmas Day and will aim to help consumers complain to the right people if they feel aren't getting either good customer service or quality products. Bah, humbug.

VOYEURISM

WEBCAMS OF THE MONTH

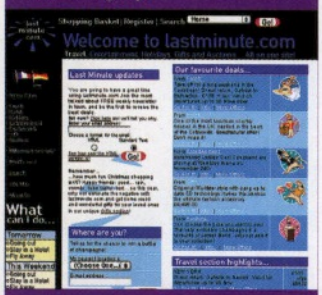
COOLERCAM
www.coolercam.com
Life has been immeasurably changed by the Water Cooler. No longer do you have to sit at a desk with a mouth as dry as the Sahara after staying out for one too many the night before. There's free water for all – and with this cam you can see exactly who is getting the stuff. Plus, there's a wonderful little sound file to make the experience even more lifelike.

FABULOUS GOAT CAM!
www.teleport.com/~randyf/goatcam.html
Webcams can be stupid, bizarre or downright outrageous. Every so often, though, there's something that comes along that takes stupidity to a whole new level. Here, as well as a camera showing four goats outdoors and in their indoor lair, you can actually speak to them. Type in your message and it uses a text-to-speech gizmo to talk to the goats. Um, OK...

Net Charts 5

THE WEB'S FAVOURITES

BRITISH INTERNET START-UPS
1 Lastminute.com
2 QXL.com
3 NetCall.co.uk
4 icollector.com
5 gameplay.com
Bain & Company



MUSIC STORES
1 Audiostreet
www.audiostreet.com
2 101CD
www.101cd.com
3 Entertainment Express
www.entexpress.com
4 CDParadise
www.cdparadise.com
5 HMV
www.hmv.co.uk
www.shopgenie.co.uk

SEARCH CATEGORIES
1 Movies
2 Investing
3 Health
4 Travel
5 Education
www.directhit.com

ONLINE TUNES
1 Rage Against The Machine
The Battle of Los Angeles
2 Backstreet Boys
Millennium
3 Shania Twain
Come On Over
4 Limp Bizkit
Significant Other
5 Red Hot Chili Peppers
Californication
www.cddb.com

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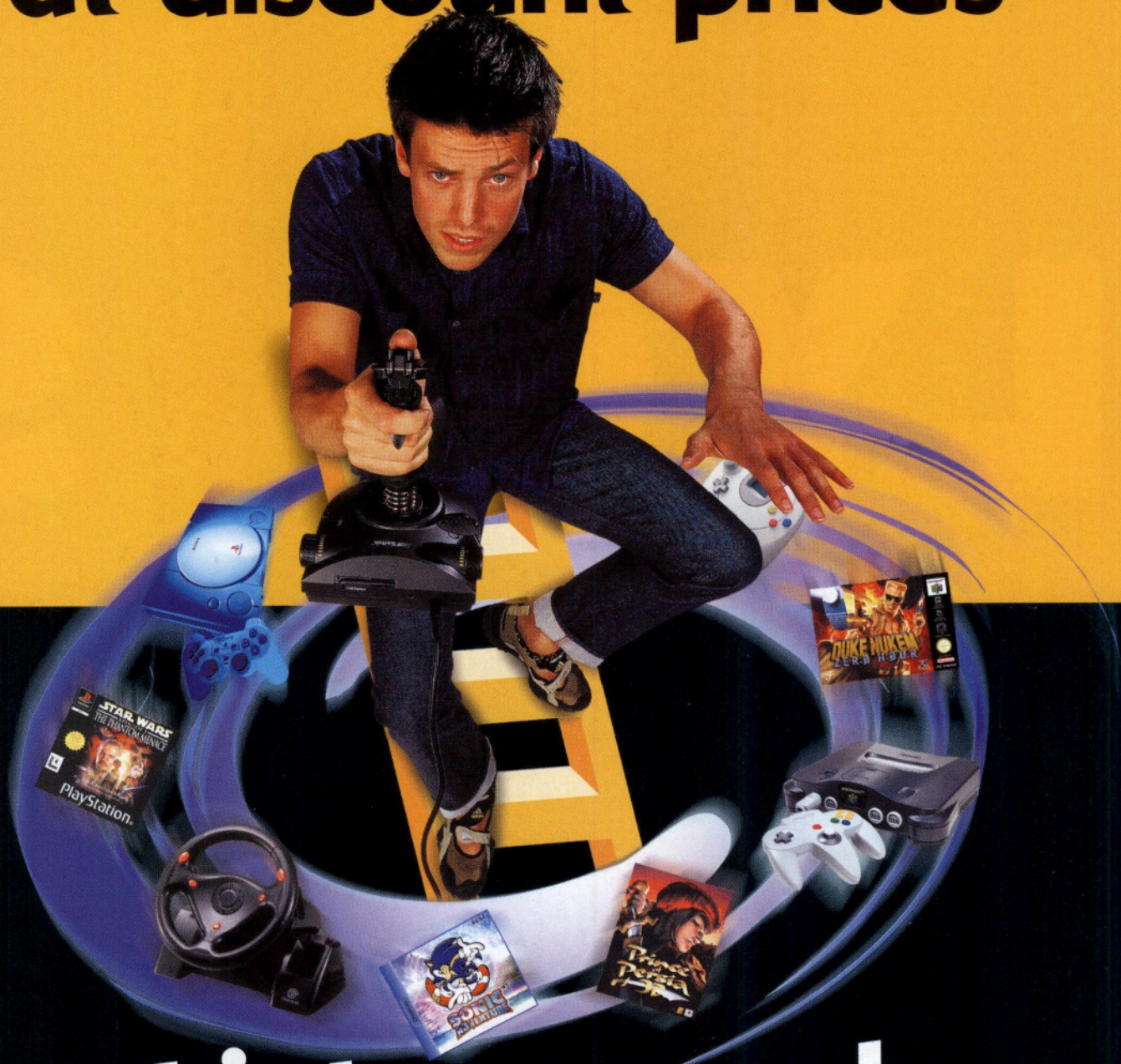

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LYCOS
Your Internet Guide.
DSB&K, Frankfurt

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Cruise: well prepared for Y2K

BEST REQUEST

FLAK JACKET REQUIRED

'Fighter Aircraft for air superiority and defence. Full compliment of weaponry needed. Pilots with combat experience also needed.'

That's the slightly bizarre request posted on eWanted by someone in Loughton, Essex. There are no reports of Saddam Hussein having moved into the area, so we can only assume that someone is preparing to rule the world when it all goes pear-shaped come the Millennium. Either that, or a farmer has decided to take the war against the French ban on British beef that little bit too far. What's the betting Robin Cook makes him an offer?

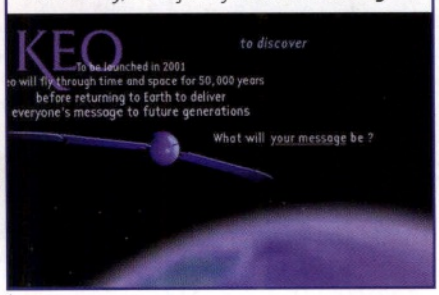
www.ewanted.com

STUPIDEST IDEA

LOST IN SPACE

Earth, the final frontier

Madness: a project called KEO is creating a capsule that will be sent into space in 2001 before returning 50,000 years later, and you can write a message to be placed in it. Creator Jean-Marc Philippe said that 'KEO is like a painting where each individual's message is one small dot of paint that he or she leaves, before standing back to... find meaning in the rich canvas of human colours.' If the creator speaks that much crap, how is the thing meant to take off? But hey, we're just cynical. ***www.keo.org***



Cruellest woman

Hewitt: blew it

Love letters straight from a fart

Be warned – although email is a great way to make your feelings known to a loved one, your cyber letters might be seen by more people than you bargained for.

That's what happened when a US Airforce cadet emailed the object of his affections. Not only did she reject his advances, she forwarded the email to a load of friends. The message soon had a 22-page list of forwarding addresses and had arrived in the UK and Australia. But given that he wrote 'If your love was a grain of sand, my love would be a universe of beaches', we reckon he deserved all he got.

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DKNY® Doice & Gabbana® Fendi® Girbaud® Sebago® Versace®
Hugo Boss® Kangol® Cole Haan® Harley Davidson® and more!

dayslikethese

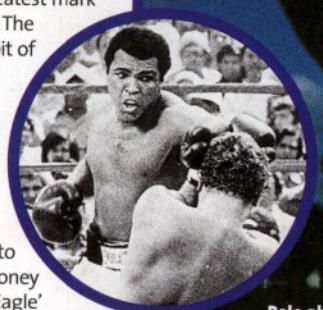
YOUR MONTH ON THE WEB

12 SUN A sporting chance

BBC Sports Personality of the Century, December 12 1999

The annual BBC Sports Personality of the Year award is as traditional as fish and chips, and this year Auntie is presenting an additional millennium award to the man or woman who has made the greatest mark on sport over the past century. The word 'personality' is always a bit of a misnomer – monotonic Nigel Mansell won in 1986, after all – but the winner should have 'captured the imagination of the nation'. There's too many contenders to guess who will win – although Pele and Ali are sure to do well – but we reckon our money is perfectly safe on Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards *not* to come in the top three.

www.bbc.co.uk/sport/



Pele always knew he could win the bet to jump over Ali

DEAR DIARY

DEC 8 WEDNESDAY — Birthday: **Kim Basinger**, 46 ***www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Agency/3160/***

The Crime Writer's Awards, Leicester Square ***www.noveladvice.com***

Birthday: Donny Osmond, 42 ***www.donny.com***

10 FRI — *End of Days* opens ***www.end-of-days.com***

Birthday: Kenneth Branagh, 39 ***www.branaghcompendium.com***

11 SAT — Tripleprint Gold Cup, Cheltenham ***www.cheltenham.co.uk***

Birthday: Esther Bennet (Eternal), 27 ***www.xs4all.nl/~robinw/eternal/***

12 SUN — Edvard Munch born in 1863 ***www.angelfire.com/de/icedgrrl/index.html***

Frank Sinatra born in 1915 ***www.oswego.edu/~klenotiz/SinatraPage/***

18 SAT — British Dance Music Awards, NEC, Birmingham ***www.uk-dance.org***

Birthday: Steven Spielberg, 52 ***www.spielberg-dreamworks.com***

19 SUN — Sugar Ray Robinson retained his boxing crown in 1955 ***www.ipcress.com/writer/boxing.html***

Edith Piaf born 1915 ***www.smeth.demon.co.uk***

20 MON — 57th Golden Globe Nominations, Los Angeles ***www.goldenglobes.org***

Birthday: Billy Bragg, 42 ***www.billybragg.co.uk***

21 TUES — Birthday: **Jane Fonda**, 62 ***www.multimania.com/angel/Barbarella/***

22 WED — Wilheim Rontgen made the first X-ray in 1895 ***chandra.harvard.edu/xray_astro/index.html***

Birthday: Maurice & Robin Gibb, 50 ***www.bgwoc.org***

28 TUES — Birthday: Denzel Washington, 45 ***the-movietimes.com/thrsdir/actors/dwashington.html***

Birthday: Patrick Rafter, 27 ***welcome.to/UPROFC***

29 WED — Ireland adopted constitution in 1937 ***www.irlgov.ie/***

Birthday: Jon Voight, 61 ***members.tripod.com/~Monkees23/jvoight/***

30 THURS — Birthday: Tracey Ullman, 40 ***www.hwired.com/tullman/***

Birthday: Ben Johnson, 38 ***www.benjohnson979.com***

31 FRI — Birthday: Val Kilmer, 41 ***www.planetkilmer.com***

John Denver was born in 1943 ***www.johndenver.net***

JAN 1 SAT — Millennium Dome opens ***www.dome2000.co.uk***

Birthday: George Lucas, 56 ***www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Boulevard/1805/lucass.html***

It is perfectly safe, honest

31 FRI Party like it's not 1999

Eve of the new Millennium, 31 December 1999

Let the spoilsports who insist that we shouldn't celebrate until next year go to bed early, and join in the most cracking Friday night you could ever hope to witness. The major cities are promising fine fare for the reveller: London will have a stream of fire down the Thames, Edinburgh will host Britain's biggest street party and there'll be a world-wide link up of cannons beginning in New Zealand, with each country firing at midnight. It all promises – if planes don't fall out the sky and cash machines hold on to the readies, that is – to give us a fab time. Just don't moan when you have to pay £4 for half a shandy.

www.visitbritain.com/millennium/

26 SUN Animal magic

***Muppets from Space* released, December 26 1999**

The combination of lengthy school holidays and too much chocolate means that animated movies always seem to go down a treat at Christmas, so it's apt that the latest Muppet movie is being released for the festive season. In this, their sixth feature film, Gonzo starts to develop a complex about what animal he actually is. After receiving messages in his breakfast cereal he realises he's an alien, and leaves the Muppets' home in an attempt to rediscover himself. The usual chaos ensues, and the rest of Jim Henson's creations are left with the job of trying to rescue him. Some critics have given it luke-warm reviews, but we reckon that anything that parodies the Spice Girls (the 'Mice Girls') has to be worth a gander.

www.muppetsfromspace.com

S club 7's new marketing ploy still couldn't shift any records

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY; PICTURES: ALLSPORT, PA, REX

13 MON *Jailhouse Rock* reached number one in 1957 ***www.elvispresleyonline.com***

Birthday: Dick Van Dyke, 74 ***www.geocities.com/Athens/Academy/8056/materia.html***

14 TUES The South Pole was reached for the first time in 1911 ***www.southpole.com***

Nostradamus born 1503 ***www.NostradamusUsa.com***

15 WED **Walt Disney** died in 1966 ***www.disney.com***

16 THURS International Show Jumping Championships ***www.olympia-show-jumping.co.uk***

Beethoven born 1770 ***www.geocities.com/Vienna/Strasse/2914/beethoven/***

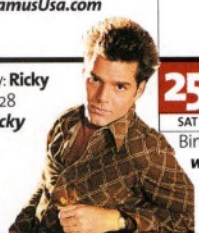
17 FRI *Inspector Gadget* opens ***www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Screen/7219/***

Birthday: Kerry Packer, 62 ***www.abc.net.au/btn/australians/packer.htm***

23 THURS The BBC began a daily news service in 1922 ***www.bbc.co.uk/news***

Birthday: Corey Haim, 28 ***www.dfw.net/~kentb/***

24 FRI Birthday: **Ricky Martin**, 28 ***www.rickymartin.com***



25 SAT Christmas Day ***www.christmas.com***

Birthday: Shane McGowan, 50 ***www.pogues.com***

26 SUN Boxing Day ***www.geocities.com/~andy_fletcher/seasons/boxing/index.html***

Birthday: Lars Ulrich, 36 ***metnem.simplenet.com/lars.html***

27 MON Marlene Dietrich born 1901 ***www.marlene.com***

Birthday: Gerard Depardieu, 51 ***www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Hills/4763/depardieu.html***

2 SUN

Birthday: **Christy Turlington**, 31 ***christy.turlington.com***

3 MON Birthday: Michael Schumacher, 31 ***www.michael-schumacher.org***

Birthday: Mel Gibson, 44 ***sooma.net/mel/***

4 TUES Roller skates patented in 1863 by James Plimpton ***www.british-roller-skating.org.uk***

Birthday: Michael Stipe, 40 ***www.wbr.com/rem/***

5 WED World Team Football championships begin ***www.footballnews.co.uk.***

Birthday: Diane Keaton, 54 ***mrshowbiz.go.com/people/dianekeaton/index.html***

6 THURS Twelfth Night ***members.tripod.com/~newyearseve/***

Birthday: Rowan Atkinson, 44 ***www.xmission.com/~tchansen/blackadder/***

inbox

Dear thenet,

Am I alone in finding ***last minute.com*** completely unusable? My current Internet setup means I never have to wait more than a few seconds for any site to download, but with Last Minute I sit and I sit, waiting until in the end I usually give up.

Why is it such a revered site? Is it all hype? When I did once manage to get through (by going off and making a cup of tea and coming back 10 minutes later) I found a disappointing and confusing site. Looks like it'll have to be Bognor caravan site again.

Martin
Martin@design-online.co.uk

We have found that the huge amount of traffic to the site has slowed it down at peak times but overall we've found it very usable.

Some caravans near a tree yesterday

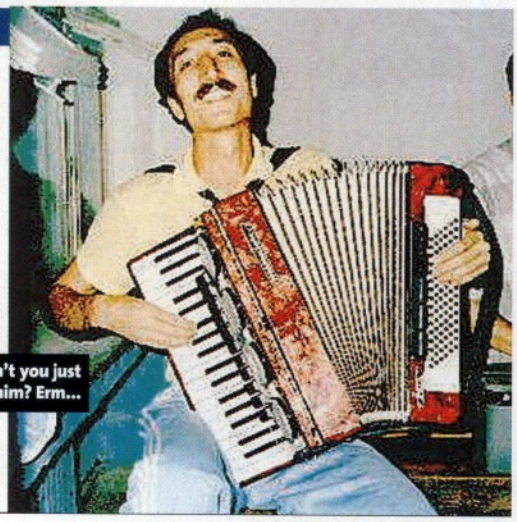
READER'S LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear thenet,

What on earth is going on with that Turkish bloke? My inbox has been inundated with emails telling me about Mahir and his crap home page. There are thousands of wonderful Web sites out there worth spending time on, so how does he become an international celebrity by putting dodgy low-grade pictures of himself on a site and inviting any woman in the world to come round for sex and nude photographs? I despair of the human race – and, most of all, I wish I'd thought of it myself.

Shaun Taylor
Shaun_taylor@mad.scientist.com

A special prize of a weekend as Mahir's house guest to the first reader to set up a 'Mahir vs Mr T' Web site. You know it's only a matter of time...



Mahir: don't you just love him? Erm...

Dear thenet,

Please can you help me? I run up a big phone bill using the Internet and about 30 percent of it is checking mail. I have Outlook Express and was wondering if there is any way of checking to see if I have new mail without actually going online, as it would cut my bill no end.

Leanne Mayes
Amy@Amie.freeserve.co.uk

By strange coincidence, reader Digby Shaw ***(digbyshaw@hotmail.com)*** *emailed this month to tell us how to cut your time using Outlook Express 5: apparently, you need to set up a new account in the 'tools account' page. When the menu reaches the 'mail server' page, you select 'http' as the server and enter* ***http://services.msn.com/svcs/hotmail/httpmail.asp*** *as the address before entering your user name and password as normal. A Hotmail folder is set up in Outlook Express with its own inbox, saving you the trouble of reading and composing your mail online.*

Dear thenet,

Yes, it's another tale of an online wedding. I live in Warrington, and last October I got talking to a girl from Sunderland in Yahoo! chat. We spoke most nights for a couple of weeks, and soon the chats turned into phone calls. She moved in with me at the end of February and we have just set a date for our wedding next year. You'll find some pictures of the happy couple at ***www.heaton.freeserve.co.uk***, just to prove that we really do exist. All I can say is thank you, Yahoo!

Gavin
Gavin@heaton.freeserve.co.uk

Please, no more...

Dear thenet,

Is there a piece of software that you can buy or download that allows you to see how much time you have spent connected to the Internet, and which subsequently calculates how much you can expect to pay when the phone bill arrives?

If not, do you think I should give Bill Gates a call and suggest he investigates such a concept?

Mr C Young
chrisyoung@bun.com

Why give him the satisfaction? He's rich enough already. Anyway, other people have got there first: PC users should automatically be told how long they've been connected whenever they use the 'Connect' facility in Windows. Mac users can check under 'PPP' in the options folder. Of course, you still have to work out from your phone bill how much you're being charged per minute. Alternatively, try ***www.rjsoftware.com****, who produce 'Clockwise', a Shareware application that does the counting for you.*

Bill Gates: 'I'd love a caravan, me'

PHOTO: REX FEATURES

MAIL MONKEY Kicking up a right fuss

From: **mailmonkey@chimp.co.uk**
Sent: Thursday November 18, 1999
To: k.keegan@football-association.co.uk
Subject: Belgium here we come...

Dear Kev,

Hope you're keeping well, though I notice you still haven't returned any of my calls. Damn rude, if you ask me. Still, I was glad to see our little ruse came off in the big match: getting the boys from the Bricklayers Arms in Croydon to masquerade as the Scottish international side was a stroke of genius, if you ask me. Our cover was almost blown when one of them accidentally knocked a header in, but I think we've got away with it, no thanks to your efforts.

Anyway, now you've made it through to the 'Low Countries 2000 Finals' just imagine the commercial opportunities that are opening up for you and the team. This monkey's your man. No doubt you'll remember the remarkable job I did in marketing Gary Barlow as the new George Michael (look out for a scandalous incident in a Cleethorpes portaloo that the papers will soon be getting a whiff of). I've got a few similar pranks up my fur-lined sleeve for you: plans are already afoot for a Fatboy Slim remix of *Head Over Heels In Love* which we'll have out in time for the Christmas market. Alternatively, how about a remake of *The Krays* featuring Gary and Phil Neville? Or a few discreet nights out on the town for Paul Scholes (who Duracell are very interested in sponsoring) and Geri Halliwell? I even considered setting up a fan club for your good self entitled the Kevin Keegan Klan, but Mrs Monkey suggested I might like to rethink that one.

In the meantime, I've popped a copy of the latest Trusthouse Monké brochure in the post, which outlines some of the ape-friendly hotels you and the squad might like to stay while you're over in Holland. Our delightful hostesses will tend to your every need; Stringfellow certainly had no complaints when he spent a weekend with us.

Speak to you soon,

Mail Monkey

www.amsterdamstun.com

www.englandfc.com

www.gbfans.co.uk

www.euro2000.com

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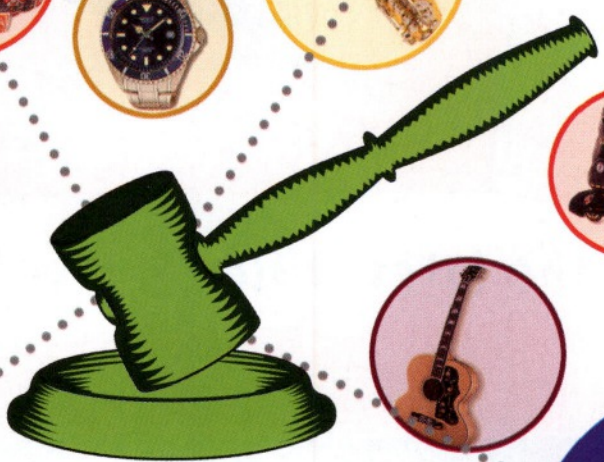

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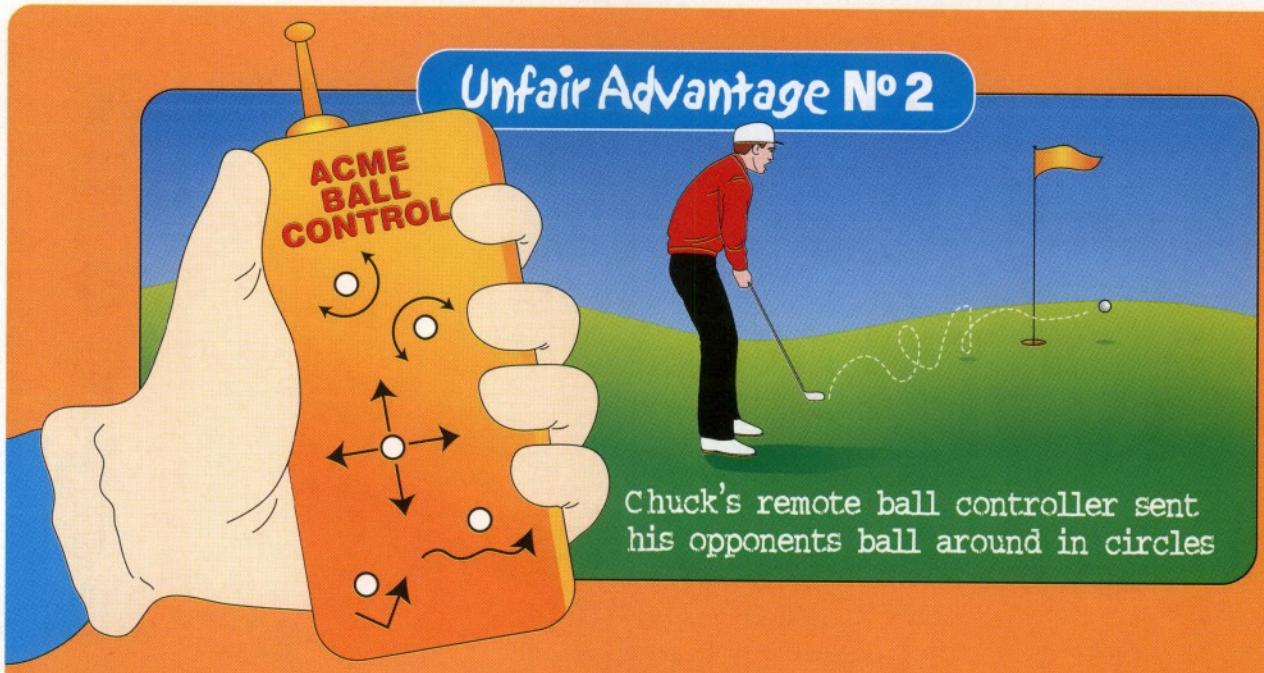
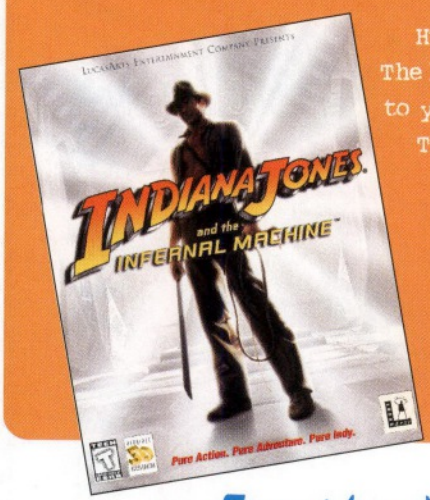

Unfair Advantage Nº 2

Chuck's remote ball controller sent his opponents ball around in circles

OUR AMAZING LOW WEB PRICES WILL SEND YOUR MATES GREEN WITH ENVY



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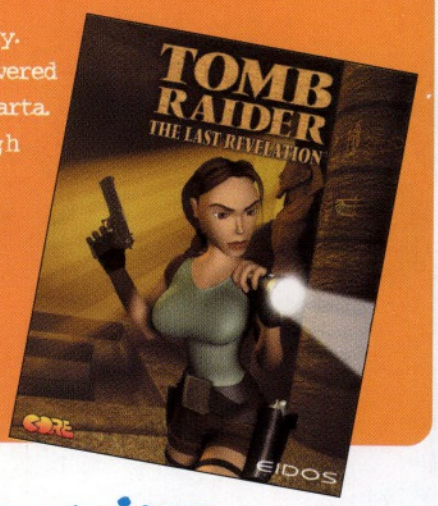

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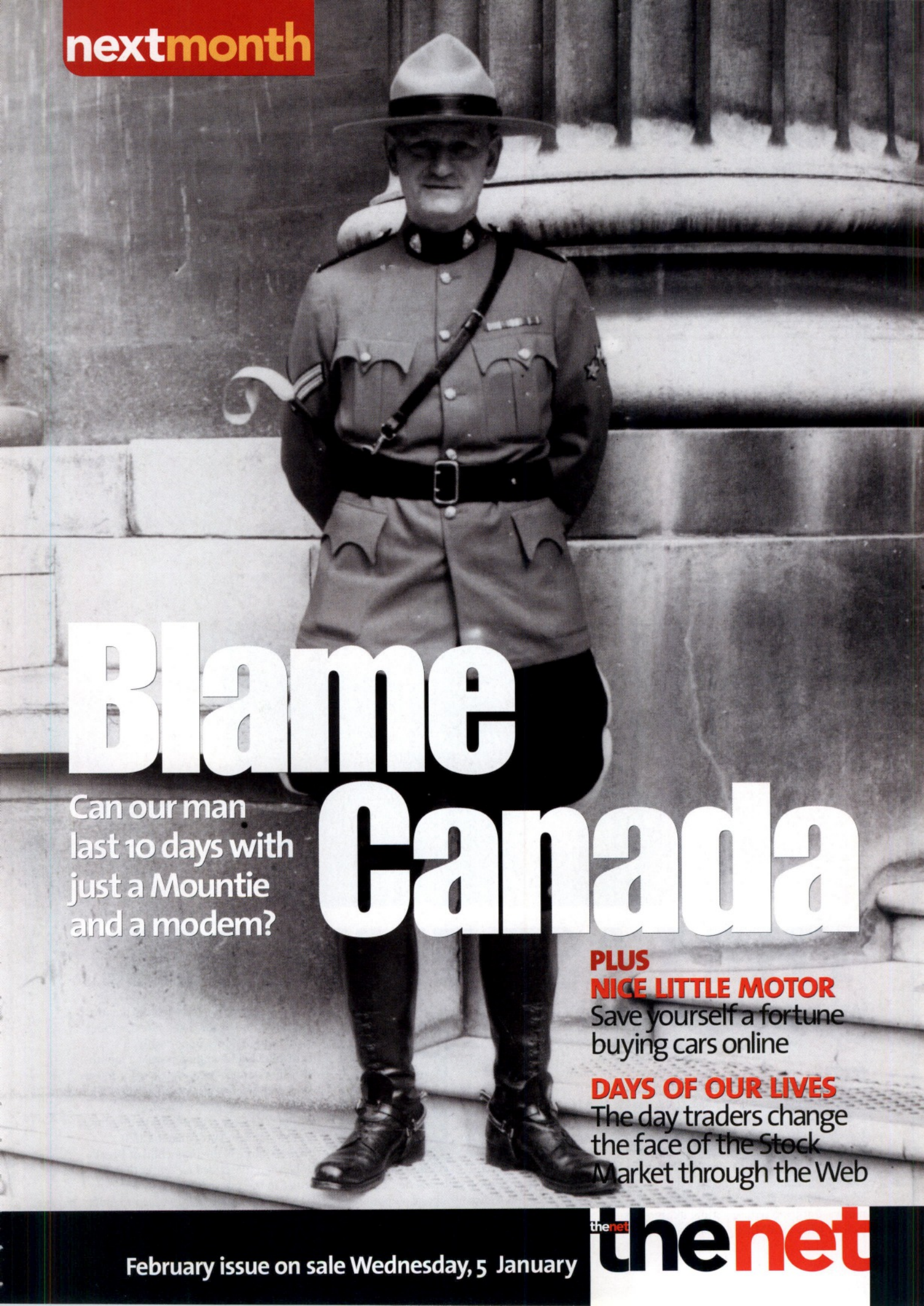

nextmonth

Blame Canada

Can our man last 10 days with just a Mountie and a modem?

PLUS

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Save yourself a fortune buying cars online

DAYS OF OUR LIVES
The day traders change the face of the Stock Market through the Web

February issue on sale Wednesday, 5 January

thenet

THE LAST EMPEROR

No6 LAST MINUTE
www.lastminute.com

The superlatives in the guestbook at ***lastminute.com*** would fill an average thesaurus. 'I have fallen truly, madly, deeply in love,' says Mandi of the travel and gift service. 'You saved my life,' claims Julie. 'Looks as though it might prove more important than oxygen,' gushes John.

You'd be tempted to suggest such correspondents could do with getting out more – until you realise getting out more is exactly what Last Minute is all about. To many, what started as an awkwardly-designed site offering a smattering of gifts and away breaks has become an absolute essential – to some, almost a cult – that's got traditional retailers seriously worried. And it shows no sign of stopping.

The site's become an absolute essential – to some, almost a cult

Launched in November 1998, the site has charged through the battlefield of e-commerce like an axe-wielding lunatic, and is currently valued at a jaw-dropping £400 million. More importantly, it's furnishing half-a-million people a month with short-notice breaks, tickets for music, sport and theatre events and a range of gift ideas which range from the eminently sensible (a coffee set for £40) to the simply bizarre (tandem skydiving at £235).

Last Minute is the brainchild of Brent Hoberman (described as 'hotter than Tom Cruise in the Internet world' by one over-enthusiastic scribe) who, with co-founder Martha Lane Fox, has become the darling of London's new media set. He dreamed the

Hoberman: here, there and everywhere

LASTMINUTE.COM

WHAT IS IT? Online store offering gifts, tickets and holidays aimed at the spontaneous buyer
LAUNCHED 1998
TRAFFIC 4.8 million page impressions per month with 550,000 unique users
BASE Park House, 116 Park Street, London W1Y
KEY FEATURES Searchable holidays index, comprehensive gift section and a newly-launched online auction service. Currently offering millennium specials

site up during a surfing session: 'I wanted to find things I could buy online and I couldn't find any. I kept thinking "why is that?". I'm a person who likes to do things at the last minute, but if I wanted to book a hotel I'd have to ring round everyone trying to find one. I saw an opportunity to use the Internet to do that.

'The technical challenge of setting the site up was huge. It looked awful at first and it was hard to get suppliers on board, particularly big airlines and travel companies. But the momentum of it has been greater than we thought – everything has gone off the scale. The attraction of the business comes from the consumers' response. We're lucky that people have confidence in our brand now. It's a unique model and it's growing all the time.'

LM's attraction, aside from the range on offer, lies in the ground-breakingly cheap prices (£99 for a flight to New York being a particular favourite) and the delightful personal touches: a 'serious money' section with indulgent, quirky gifts and a regular competition where a mystery item's price is offered in pence instead of pounds. Though some users complain they can't get quickly to what they want – and it is true the site is a catalogue browser's interactive dream come true – the figures speak for themselves: 50 percent month-on-month growth in October alone and 4.8 million hits a month.

Hoberman claims he'd be using the site even if he didn't work on it, citing his recent discovery of the 'gift reminder' service as a particular revelation – tap in friends' or relatives' birthdays and you're not only told when you need to buy them a gift but also given a whole range of personalised suggestions on what they might like.

But with potential buyers waving cheques the size of Manchester United's transfer budget at him, surely now's the time for Brent and Martha to sell up and move on? Apparently not. 'We're really interested in growing all the time. We were never interested in making a quick buck – the money wasn't the reason we started it. We want to be one of the biggest e-commerce brands in the world, to be part of people's lives. We have to understand what people want and deliver it.'

'We were never interested in making a quick buck – that wasn't why we started'

To that end, the grandly-titled Last Minute Network is entering partnerships with fellow retailers to team up on services and move into France, Germany and Sweden. Expanding the restaurant booking service has also been made a priority, while the millennium that looms ever nearer on the horizon is likely to see the site's biggest ever surge in business.

Hoberman's grandest plan is to offer a premier service for events or trips that had previously been fully-booked or unavailable. 'It's for when you just have to do something,' he explains. 'Even if you hadn't planned to do it, we can make it possible.'

You wouldn't bet against him.

THE LATE SHOW The best bits of the Last Minute extravaganza

TRAVEL

The rock on which LM built its foundations; a competitive range of city breaks and trips that's almost as much fun to browse as it is to use. The search facility takes you straight to the holiday you want without the endless window shopping.

GIFTS

Aimed at the overworked consumer: the regulars (electronics, chocolates, jewellery) are here, but there's also an 'adrenaline' section featuring high-octane days out, an 'adult fun' link (best not opened at work) and 'desperate to impress' for the lovelorn.

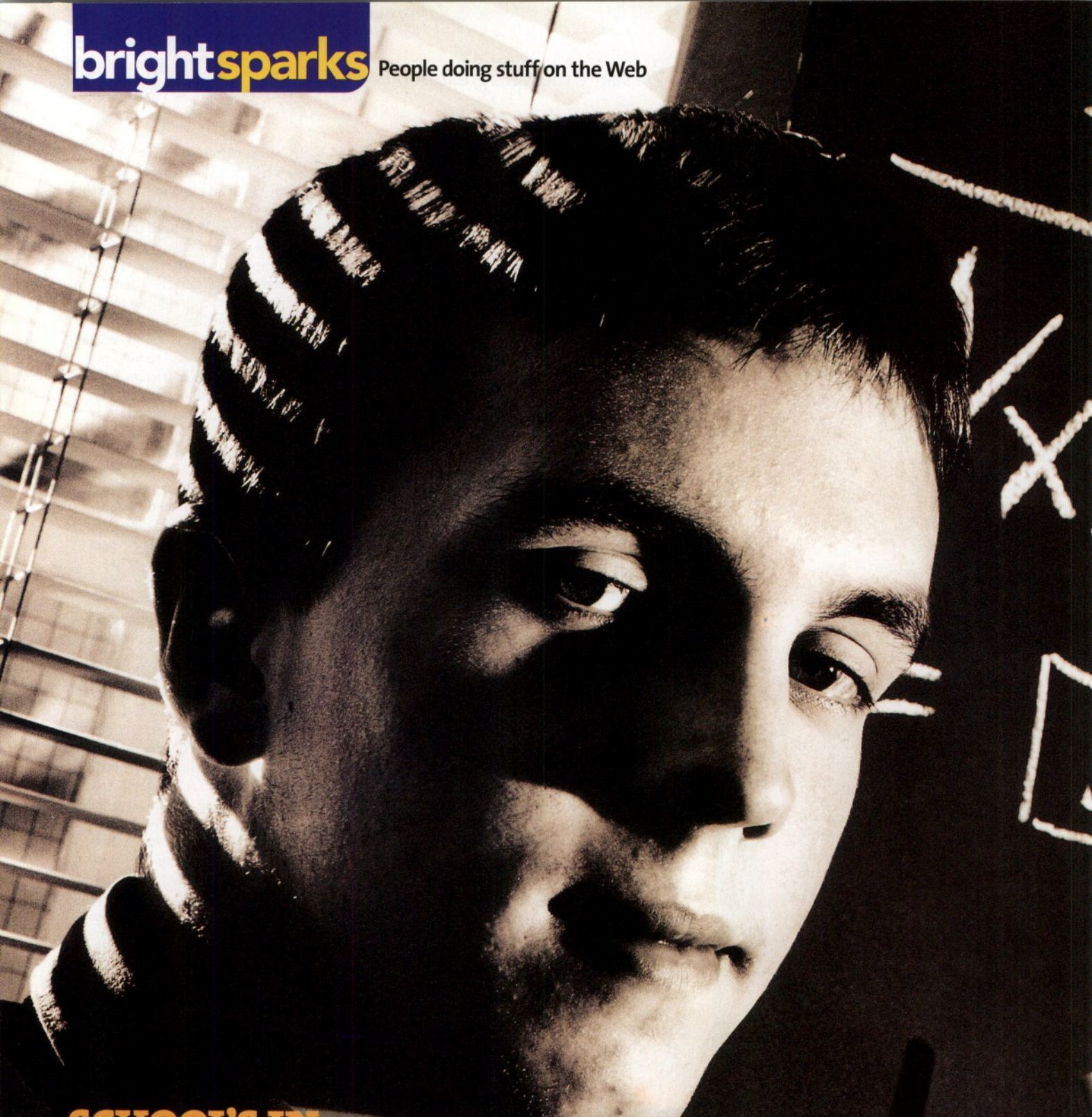
AUCTIONS

A variety of lots, including special trips, gadgets, collectables and the weird and wonderful (how does Christmas in a medieval barn in rural Somerset for £380 grab you?). Proving to be a popular feature with Last Minute devotees.

THE MILLENNIUM

Still not sure where you want to spend the last night of the 20th century? Millennium trips here include both UK and foreign jaunts, plus there's a special Harvey Goldsmith section featuring specific London events.

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: STEVE ORINO



SCHOOL'S IN From classroom to desktop entrepreneur

SCHOOLSNET *www.schoolsnet.com*

Tom Hadfield was given his first computer at the tender age of two. At three, before most children can read, he taught himself basic programming from a manual. At the age of seven, he was dismantling PCs to see how they worked. And by 12, he had his first Web site online. Two years later, he sold it for a six-figure sum.

At this point, most people would have wanted the rest of their childhood back. But Hadfield, now 17, has even bigger plans: this month he launches his latest bright idea, Schoolsnet, an education portal featuring information on schools across the UK, sections for parents and lesson plans for teachers. While nothing is certain in the cut and thrust of the online world, Schoolsnet is about as close as you can get to a sure-fire hit. Hadfield, who is both director and general manager of the 15-strong Schoolsnet team, spent the summer preparing the launch with dad Greg, a former education journalist. He now divides his time between his London office and college in Brighton, where he is studying for his A-levels.

'People ask me "Why do you still go to college?"' says Hadfield, 'but I can spend 40 years of my life commuting and working 9-5, so why start now? It's difficult keeping it all balanced, but in a positive way. Schoolsnet is going to be one of the biggest start-ups of the year. It's one of the only unoccupied industries left online.'

And despite his tender years, Hadfield is already an old hand at this Internet lark. He started football site Soccernet from his bedroom before selling it to Associated Newspapers, but was shrewd enough to retain an interest in the business until its £50 million purchase by ESPN earlier this year. So proficient is he in building and marketing sites that he is offered full-time jobs by major corporations on an almost weekly basis, yet turns them down to continue his studies and 'go out with my mates, play football, the usual stuff'.

So what's next? An international expansion for Schoolsnet, with more Web sites in the pipeline. He might decide to join the business full-time, or he may go to university. Or he could always resurrect his footballing career – he was a goalkeeper on Brighton's books until the age of 16. Sickening, isn't it?

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: STEVE ORINO

COUCH POTATOES The future of television?

VIRTUETV

www.virtuetv.com

Imagine a TV channel where there aren't any schedules, you don't pay a penny to watch and the name Jim Davidson is but a distant memory. Welcome to Virtue TV.

Launched a year ago by three new-media-savvy twentysomethings, the London-based Web-only station is building a reputation for broadcasting excellence with its heady mix of live music, documentaries, feature films and business shows. Already, Virtue has secured exclusive Webcasts of the Pet Shop Boys, Blur, Supergrass and Travis, and plans further treats for the Millennium. All you need to tune in is a copy of RealPlayer and a half-decent connection.

You don't pay to view and Jim Davidson is a distant memory

Virtue make their money through business-to-business broadcasts, and provide their entertainment shows free of charge (at the moment). The problem, as director and co-founder Nick English says, is that, until the onset of ADSL (BT's high-speed connection), most people's connections just aren't quick enough for the sort of high-quality streaming they'll be willing to pay for. When they are, however, the world will become Virtue TV's oyster: 'At the moment it tends to be watched by people who are very au fait with the Internet, but in a year's time everybody will be logging in. Already we've seen a huge surge in traffic over the last six months. When broadband comes in, people will be willing to pay to watch events and we'll draw in thousands of viewers.'

In the meantime, the company have bought up the rights to over 400 classic black and white movies featuring the likes of Laurel and Hardy, Errol Flynn and Charlie Chaplin, which will soon be available on a pay-per-view basis. High street video stores, says English, simply won't be able to compete with available-on-demand films over the Web. And those pundits who said the Net would spell the end for television? They might just be right, in a strange kind of way.

'I can spend 40 years of my life working 9-5. Why start now?'

REGRETS, I'VE HAD A FEW

REGRETS ONLY

www.regretsonly.com

Je ne regrette rien, Edith Piaf once told the world. But Barry Cadish would beg to differ. Since he put his Regrets Only site online a few months ago, the Oregon-based author has been inundated by people who have many a misdemeanour to get off their chests.

Cadish is working on a book based on the regrets of the international public, and asked contributors to his site to submit their biggest regrets. The response has been overwhelming, and many entries have been compiled on the Web. The diversity is astounding: they range from the harrowing – tales of abuse, divorce and unemployment – to the simply bizarre: 'I regret I don't like the taste of butter,' and 'I regret wrestling with Nick yesterday,' for example. Go ahead – unburden yourself today...

MAKE YOUR JOB WORK FOR YOU

Work hard and take pride in it, be highly conscientious...then when that fails read this and take the online route to the top

Never mind the burning sulphur and toasting forks: if there is a hell, you're sure to find it packed with customers, accounts departments, meetings, bosses, and Mondays.

Few people claim to really enjoy their jobs and once you've weeded out the liars, simpletons and chocolate tasters, those that do like their work are usually thinking of the perks and not the bulk of the working day. And none of this, of course, stops you wanting to impress at work or even dazzle.

If you add up all the stress, irritation, boredom and occasional raw fear, it's truly amazing what we'll do just to scrape together a few beer vouchers and a deposit on a fortnight's break in Benidorm.

So what has the Net done to improve the quality of our working lives and help us impress the boss – apart from bring us Dilbert every day, that is? Try these...

THE OLD WAY vs THE WEB WAY

THE WAY IT USED TO BE

GETTING A JOB
Sooner or later we all decide to ditch the dole queue in favour of ulcers and a salary. This means hours spent flipping through newspapers.

GOING TO WORK
The average commute involves 16 infringements of the Geneva Convention and an investigation by Amnesty International.

AT WORK
The inevitable meeting, which entails 40 minutes of lurid fantasies about him/her on the fourth floor.

GETTING AHEAD
There are two main ways of moving ahead: suck up to the boss (chances of success: fair) or dig up serious filth on senior management (chances of success: unbelievably good).

TRAINING
Most bosses have figured out that spending money on making you more appealing to head-hunters is *not* really in their interests.

BUNKING OFF
Sickies help your sanity; sadly, 'food poisoning' has largely been rumbled.

GOING OVER THE WIRE
All most people ever do about quitting work is playing the Lottery.

QUITTING IN DISGUST
It's funny how thoughts of 'Die and burn, spawn of Satan!' actually turn into: 'Really valued my time here'.

THE WAY IT IS NOW

GETTING A JOB
No sweat: jobs come to you, thanks to online recruitment. Of course, the real reason this works so well is that everyone is scanning for better salaries from the comfort of their current underpaid, dead-end position.

GOING TO WORK
Don't. The words 'working from home' used to have as much credibility as 'food poisoning' but with the possibilities of teleworking the delights of Richard and Judy – not to mention wall-to-wall incontinence ads – are simply yours for the taking.

AT WORK
Forget flicking rubber bands at colleagues. Now, thanks to the Web, you can use your time in the office to learn some really advanced time-wasting techniques, thanks to the Useless Office Skills Site. Try learning how to play *Auld Lang Syne* on a touch-tone phone. When things are really getting you down, take a peek at the Working Wounded site to find that you're not alone and read the helpful suggestions of fellow slave-salary sufferers. It even has a 'quick, the boss is coming' button. Sadly, you're still going to get called into meetings – unless you happen to work for one of the three UK companies that have thus far figured out the intricacies of video-conferencing. After a morning of surfing, your lurid fantasies may well be fuelled by more than thoughts of the receptionist, so fight back against the urge to drift off by playing Buzzword Bingo with your colleagues. The only danger with this particular plan is that the excitement caused by the marketing director's babble may inspire him to produce even more drivel next time.

Fight the urge to drift off with Buzzword Bingo

GETTING AHEAD
Incompetents still get promoted first, but the Web does mean that you can get advice on advancement (try the Hard at Work site). And if your senior management have *really* sinned in the past, then there's a chance you may be able to find the pictures on one of the amateur porn sites.

TRAINING
Nothing much different here – companies still have more sense than to pour money into making you any more marketable for other employers but there are, however, suggestions for courses aplenty – try the Leeds University site for starters.

BUNKING OFF
Creative thinking *par excellence* on the Net – really inventive excuses sites abound. Next hangover, claim that you have 'projectile leprosy', or 'trouble with your stigmata'.

GOING OVER THE WIRE
Easy. Forget the boring, lucky-to-win-a-tenner Lottery – go and set up a 'dot.com' company, sell it for £2.3 zillion (or whatever the going rate is) and retire to tax exile in the Caribbean.

QUITTING IN DISGUST
You'll find that the Kiss My Freckled Ass Goodbye site will quite probably meet all your requirements in this particular area; it includes a nifty quiz to see if it really is time to go (helpful hint: hoping to 'get shot before you arrive at the office' is probably not an indication of being completely happy at work).

WORDS: STEVE SHIPSIDE; ILLUSTRATION: RIAN HUGHES

STILL EMPLOYED?

The best of the 'pushing your luck' sites

Useless Office Skills Site *www.jlc.net/~useless/*
Endless tricks to do at the office, in between bits of work.

Kiss my freckled ass goodbye
www.kissmyfreckledassbye.com
Help with writing your dream letter of resignation.

Buzzword Bingo *www.buzzwordbingo.com*
Liven up meetings with this classic bingo variant.

Virtual Manager *www.virtual-manager.com*
Create your own nonsensical management babble.

Working Wounded *www.workingwounded.com*
Complete with a 'quick the boss is coming' button.

Moving on *www.leeds.ac.uk/bei/betbib.htm*
Sod getting a new job – go the whole hog and get a new career, or perhaps even a new way of life.

Getting ahead at work
www.hardatwork.com/hypernews/get/ahead.html
A clearing house for brown-nose ideas.

Excuses *www.rider.edu/users/grushow/humor.html*
Numerous good reasons for missing work.

Jean Paul Satre was smart enough to do his daily grind from a café

FINAL THOUGHT

Hell is other people,' said Jean Paul Sartre. He was in fact thinking of the accounts department. Or maybe middle management. Whatever, the squinting Frog philosopher was clearly talking about the workplace. The proof is that he was smart enough to do his own daily grind from the comfort of a café on the Boulevard St. Germain. There's a lesson for us all here, and if you can't actually telework from the café in question, you can at least spend hours using the Web to brighten up the working day. And with any luck, the boss'll think you're working.

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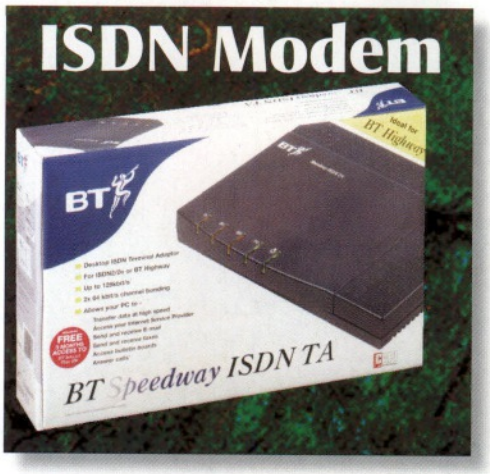

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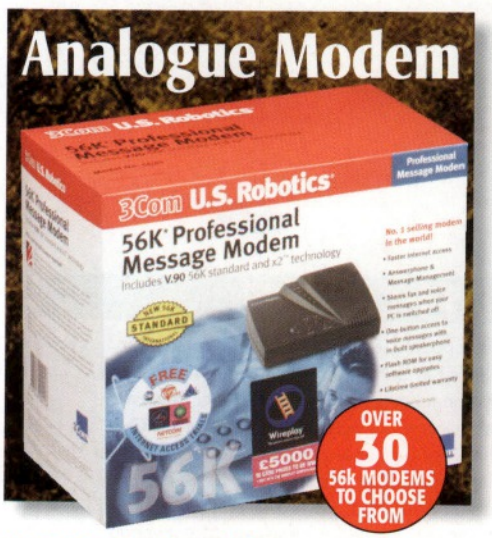

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WEB'S MOST WANTED

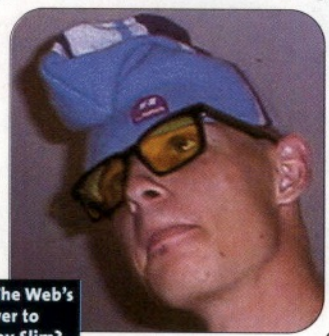
Emily Barr enters an online parallel universe and discovers that just because you're a star in real life, it doesn't necessarily qualify you for Net greatness

THE MOST POPULAR BAND IN THE world is called Trance [] Control. You might have thought it was the Backstreet Boys, just as you might have been under the impression that Britney Spears' *Baby One More Time* is, so far, the top-selling single of the year, selling well over a million units. But although you probably haven't heard of Trance [] Control, they shifted 136,919 units in September and their fanbase is growing every day. Their single, *Atomic Dance Explosion*, has been at number one, off and on, for a total of six weeks and the band currently have three other songs in the top 40.

Still don't believe us? Go to the MP3.com site, where you can download music for free. Here they reign supreme – and things that are big on the Web are now comparable, numerically, to the market's 'real life' top dogs.

Trance [] Control are a pair of Swedish cousins who call themselves WennE and DjC. Their music, as their name suggests, is trance, and they are the first to admit that, without the Web, they would be completely unknown. 'The direct contact with fans and other producers would not exist,' says Alex, aka DjC. 'I guess we'd still be sitting here composing our songs, sending a few demos here and there with no real success at all.'

They have made a little money – 'a few dollars' – from sales of their album, *beyond.2000*, which has been number one at the MP3.com site for weeks. They are unsigned, have no concrete plans for touring at the moment– yet they spend most of their spare time answering e-mails from fans all around the world.



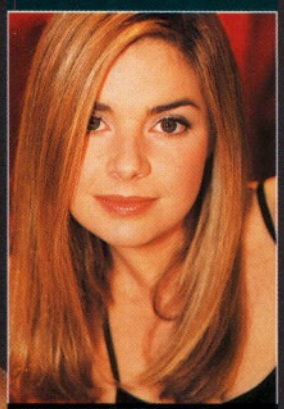
DJC The Web's answer to Fatboy Slim?

SORRY, TREV, YOU'RE OLD NEWS

Like the case of Trance [] Control, once you get past the more predictable star searches, a raft of little-known celebrities are staking a claim to fame on the Internet. Who, for example, is the most popular British broadcaster? Trevor Macdonald, probably. But connect to the Web and you'll find it is indisputably Daljit Dhaliwal, an occasional co-presenter of Channel 4 News. Dhaliwal also presents

TOP TEN TV PRESENTERS

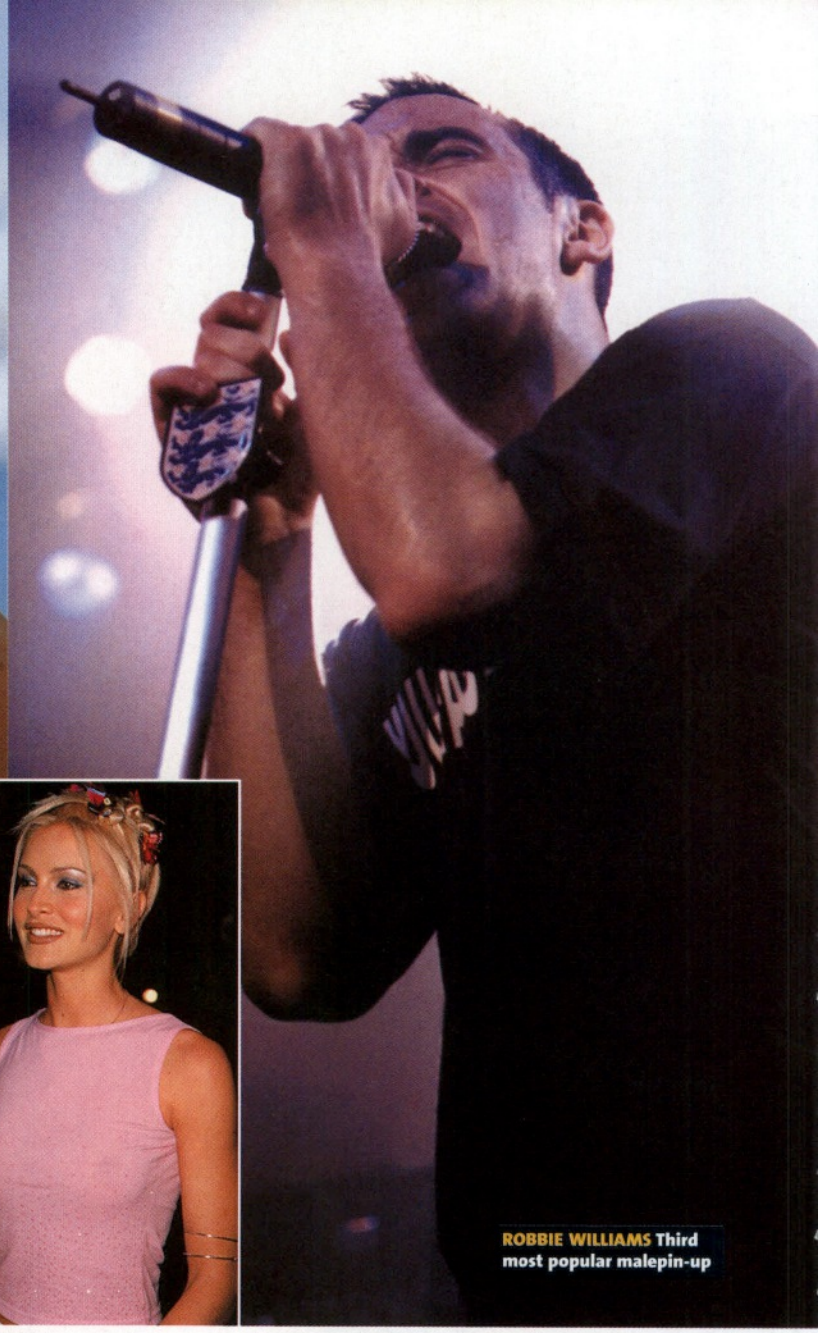
1. CAT DEELEY
2. DENISE VAN OUTEN
3. ZOE BALL
4. DAVINA MCCALL
5. GAIL PORTER
6. KELLY BROOK
7. CAROL VORDERMAN
8. ROLF HARRIS
9. CHRIS EVANS
10. CHARLIE DIMMOCK



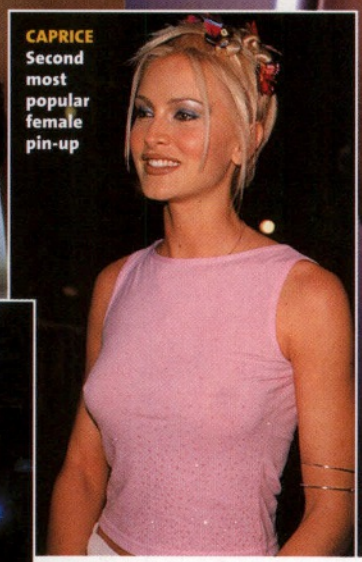
GAIL PORTER Fifth most popular TV presenter

CAT DEELEY The most popular TV presenter, says the Web

PAMELA ANDERSON Number one female pin-up



ROBBIE WILLIAMS Third most popular malepin-up



CAPRICE Second most popular female pin-up

BOYZONE Fourth most popular musical artists

ITN's World News, broadcast to much of the US. In addition, she's part of ITN's online operation – and the embarrassed recipient of an effusive fan page.

The Unofficial Daljit Dhaliwal Appreciation Page bears the following emotive plea: 'I am NOT Daljit Dhaliwal. Please do not send love letters meant for Daljit here... This is an unofficial fan site. It quite clearly says "unofficial" in the title... Do you really think she is this self-obsessed?'

Ms Dhaliwal's status amongst these fans (who are quite obviously American) is godlike. Her appeal is in the combination of her looks, her intelligence, plus the fact that she broadcasts real news.

In a recent online chat, she was hardly able to keep up with the questions, they were coming so thick and fast. Will she please move to LA? Isn't it time she had a Letterman-style chat show? The best request came from 'Bruce', who said: 'Daljit, could you give us the European weather instead of the US weather? US weather is very available from all the US stations.'

The Web offers a number of other equivalents to the real world. Instead of soap operas and fly-on-the-wall documentaries, you can look down a street in New York, or survey Mount Everest or the scene at the South Pole (you begin to understand the Dhaliwal fans' interest in the weather). In reality, we would be unlikely to stand near the Millennium Dome and look at it every 20 seconds, but we've done it, briefly, on the Web. More voyeuristically, millions have had a peek at Jenny's world, or at the lives of thousands of others who let Webcams in where they'd never allow a documentary crew.

Then there are cyber-villains – the people who send out viruses to destroy that novel you've been writing for years. Junk mail is a fact of cyberlife just as it is in real life. And, in this electronic parallel universe, there are charitable appeals. For example, the UN-run Hunger Site is growing rapidly – all you have to do is click, and the advertisers donate food where it is needed. But, just as in the real world, most people find it easier not to bother.

TIMES Top of the search poll but ft.com is the most 'used'

POWER OF THE PINK 'UN

The most visited newspaper in this country is the *News of the World*, with an average weekly circulation of 4.1 million copies. But online, the most popular British rag is the *Financial Times*: its site, ft.com, receives around 20 million visits per month. Paul Maidment, the online editor, attributes this partly to the fact that the *FT*'s readership comprises business people. 'They are used to being online,' he says. 'They can read the news, get the sports score, then flip back to a spreadsheet.'

When newspapers started to go online five years ago, there was widespread consternation at the idea of 'giving away' something that's for sale in the real world.

THE NET'S TOP 100

We know what you're looking for. There's no greater indicator of the state of the nation than the people and places they furtively type into their favourite search engines. So we asked three of Britain's biggest to give us the lowdown on what the public were searching for in 16 categories – 100 results in total. Listed over the next four pages, they 'll raise more than a few eyebrows among those who think the Web's all sex and Shareware...

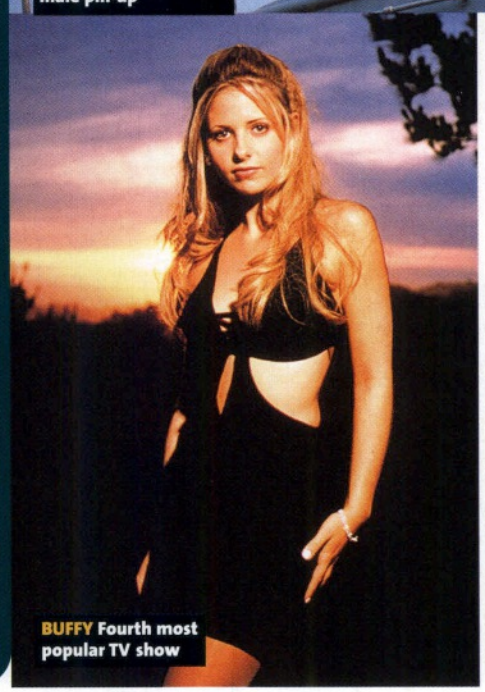
TOP FEMALE PIN-UPS
1 PAMELA ANDERSON
2 CAPRICE
3 JORDAN
4 BRITNEY SPEARS
5 CAMERON DIAZ
6 DENISE VAN OUTEN
7 KELLY BROOK
= GAIL PORTER
9 JO GUEST
10 SARA COX

TOP MALE PIN-UPS
1 WILL SMITH
2 LEONARDO DI CAPRIO
3 ROBBIE WILLIAMS
4 RONAN KEATING
5 PRINCE WILLIAM

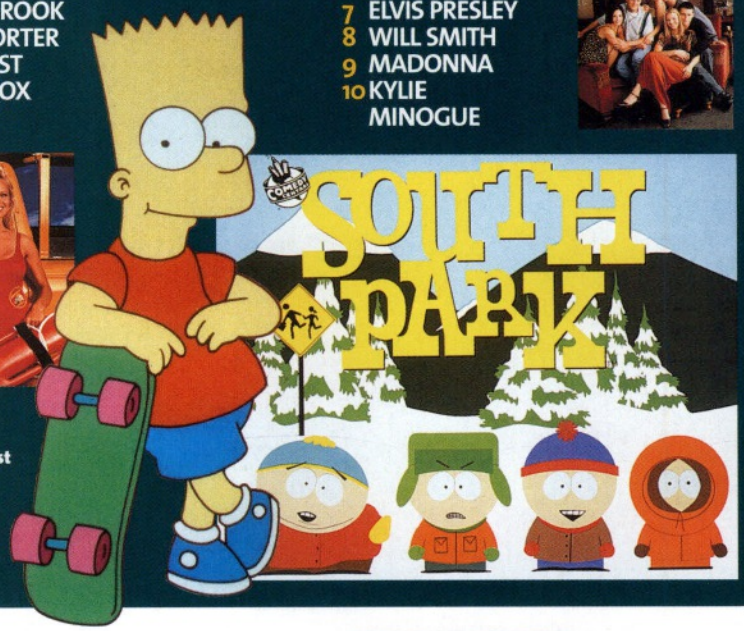
TOP MUSICAL ARTISTS
1 BRITNEY SPEARS
2 GERI HALLIWELL
3 SHANIA TWAIN
4 BOYZONE
5 ROBBIE WILLIAMS
6 BACKSTREET BOYS
7 ELVIS PRESLEY
8 WILL SMITH
9 MADONNA
10 KYLIE MINOGUE

TOP TELEVISION SHOWS
1 SOUTH PARK
2 THE SIMPSONS
3 POKEMON
4 BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER
5 FRIENDS

LEONARDO DI CAPRIO Second most popular male pin-up



BUFFY Fourth most popular TV show



THE SIMPSONS Second most popular TV show

The fears, as Maidment realised at the time, were ill-founded. 'If publishers thought they couldn't go on the Web because they'd cannibalise their existing business, that means they actually believe that print journalism doesn't have a future. If you think like that you shouldn't be publishing a paper at all.' Maidment firmly believes that a traditional newspaper does have value ('you can read it in the bath, swat flies with it...') and that the only sensible strategy is to have complementary print and Web operations.

'The Web site has to be different from the newspaper,' he stresses. 'We decided when we started that we weren't going to replicate the *FT* online – we were going to create a Web publication. The idea was unusual at the time.' Indeed, the printed *FT*'s circulation has risen since the site's existence.

'They can read news, get the results and flip back to a spread-sheet'

LIFE IN THE OLD SPORT YET

Those of us who aren't that interested in share prices might be more likely to want to check the sports scores. In fact, millions of office-bound fans all over the world check sports sites in the middle of a dull winter's afternoon. A site that carries sports news in real time is a valuable resource, and, because of the interest in our football, cricket and rugby, British sports sites are among the most visited in the world.

DALJIT DHALIWAL Newsreader turned Net superstar

Just outside the top five online newspapers is the *Sporting Life*. This had a long history as a daily sports paper, most often seen under the arms of grim-faced men drinking pints at racecourses. A couple of years ago, its owners, the Mirror Group, bought its rival, the *Racing Post*, and eventually the *Sporting Life* folded. Now it's run from Leeds as a Web site, with none of the same staff – all it shares with the defunct paper is a name. It receives over 500,000 hits a month, compared with the paper's previous daily circulation of 40,000.

RADIO GAGA

Maybe you don't care about money or sport? Stick the radio on, then. In real life, we tend to listen to mainstream radio stations like Radio One – a preference reflected in the top five stations listed on these pages. But just behind the big boys come a whole slew of Internet upstarts. The revolution in Net radio – as at MP3.com, all you need is a free software download – means a multiplication of opportunities for niche stations. There are limited possibilities for, say, a drum 'n' bass station in the Basildon area – but when your audience is the entire world, there's no limit.

44k.com is a Dublin-based station that broadcasts dance music exclusively over the Web. It started in 1997, and has gradually

TOP TEN WEB THESPIANS

TOP ACTORS

1 BRAD PITT
2 MEL GIBSON
3 KEANU REEVES
= PIERCE BROSNAN
5 WILL SMITH

TOP ACTRESSES

1 JENNIFER LOPEZ
2 GILLIAN ANDERSON
3 CAMERON DIAZ
4 JULIA ROBERTS
5 CATHERINE ZETA JONES

PIERCE BROSNAN
Third most popular actor

JENNIFER LOPEZ
Most popular actress

OFFICIAL: THE FUNNIEST JOKE ON THE INTERNET

SOURCE *100 Hot.com*

A BUSINESSMAN WAS getting ready to go on a business trip. His wife was a flirtatious sort with a healthy sex drive, so he thought he'd buy her something to keep her occupied while he was gone. He went to a dildo store and was presented with the Voodoo Penis.

'It looks like every other dildo,' he said. The shopkeeper pointed to a door and said: 'Voodoo Penis, the door.'

The Voodoo Penis miraculously rose out of its box, darted over to the door, and started pounding the keyhole and whole door shook wildly. 'I'll take it!' said the businessman.

He took it home to his wife and told her all she had to do was say 'Voodoo Penis, my crotch.' After he'd been gone a few days, the wife remembered the Voodoo Penis. She undressed, opened the box and said 'Voodoo Penis, my crotch!' The Voodoo Penis shot to her crotch and started pumping. After three mind-shattering orgasms, she became exhausted. She tried to pull it out, but it was stuck in her. Worried, she decided to go to the hospital. She started to drive, quivering with every thrust of the dildo. On the way, another intense orgasm made her swerve all over the road.

A police officer saw this and pulled her over. He asked asked how much she'd had to drink. Gasping, she said, 'I haven't had anything to drink, officer. You see, I've got this Voodoo Penis..."

The officer looked at her for a second, shook his head and, in an arrogant voice, replied, 'Yeah, right... Voodoo Penis, my ass.'

'Ours is a global form of music in that the tracks have no lyrics'

built up a worldwide following; it's now one of the two biggest dance music radio stations on the Internet and has a Webzine to complement it, called etronik.com.

'Getting the niche audience on a global scale takes a lot of time,' says 44k.com co-founder Marc Butterley. 'There's no way round it. It's hard work.'

Listeners now come from as far afield as Venezuela and Croatia. 'We try to keep the content very global,' says Richard Brophy, editor of etronik. 'I mean, China... China will explode. Ours is a global form of music, in that the tracks often have no lyrics. I'd love to be able to give people the magazine in their own language. That would be cool.'

I listened to a Chinese station for a while last week (Radio Xihu, since you ask). Today I'm sitting at my desk being serenaded by Radio Drugi from Zagreb. It certainly makes a change from Melody FM.

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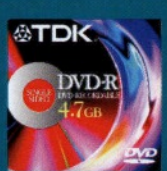

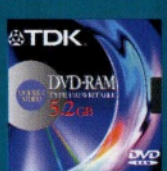

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at the heart of it

THE NET CHARTS

GILLIAN ANDERSON
Second most popular actress

RADIO ONE Most popular radio station

TOP FILMS
1 STARS WARS SERIES
2 AUSTIN POWERS
3 BLAIR WITCH PROJECT
4 JAMES BOND SERIES
5 SOUTH PARK

TOP SPORTSPEOPLE
1 ANNA KOURNIKOVA
2 DAVID BECKHAM
3 JONAH LOMU
4 LINFORD CHRISTIE
5 DAMON HILL

TOP FOOTBALL TEAMS
1 MANCHESTER UNITED
2 ARSENAL
3 CHELSEA
= LIVERPOOL
5 TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

TOP FOOTBALLERS
1 DAVID BECKHAM
2 ALESSANDRO DEL PIERO
3 MICHAEL OWEN
4 FILIPPO INZAGHI
5 RIVALDO
From *www.soccer-links.com*

TOP NEWSPAPERS
1 FINANCIAL TIMES
2 THE TIMES
3 DAILY MAIL
4 THE GUARDIAN
5 THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

TOP RADIO STATIONS
1 RADIO ONE

2 CAPITAL RADIO
3 RADIO FOUR
4 TALK RADIO
5 RADIO FIVE LIVE

MOST SEARCHED-FOR WORDS
1 MP3
2 SEX
3 HOTMAIL
4 YAHOO
5 POKEMON
From *www.searchterms.com*

TOP ONLINE SHOPS
1 AMAZON *www.amazon.com*
2 EBAY *www.ebay.com*
3 TICKETMASTER *www.ticketmaster.com*
4 BARNES AND NOBLE *www.barnesandnoble.com*
5 CD NOW *www.cdnow.com*
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MOST-VISITED SITES
1 AOL NETWORK
2 YAHOO! *www.yahoo.com*
3 MICROSOFT *www.microsoft.com*
4 LYCOS *www.lycos.com*
5 GO NETWORK *www.go.com*
6 EXCITE *www.excite.com*
7 AMAZON *www.amazon.com*
8 TIME WARNER *www.pathfinder.com*
9 REAL *www.real.com*
10 ALTAVISTA *www.altavista.com*
From *www.mediametrix.com*

HOW WE COMPILED OUR PARALLEL UNIVERSE

We asked three of Britain's biggest search engines, Excite (*www.excite.co.uk*), Lycos (*www.lycos.co.uk*) and Search UK (*www.searchuk.com*) to trawl through their databases for the past three months and find the most popular searches in each of the above categories. We then collated their figures to produce a definitive list – so don't blame us for David Beckham coming out on top...

searchUK
excite UNITED KINGDOM
LYCOS Your Personal Internet Guide

AMAZON – THE NEW HARRODS

While you're humming along to those Croatian hits, why not go shopping? The biggest shop in Britain is Tesco, with a turnover of £18.5 billion. Last year, Amazon's sales reached $1 billion, making it not only the biggest shop on the Web, but a challenge to the physical world's top retailers. Amazon is no longer just a bookshop; it also sells CDs, videos, DVDs, toys, games, electronics, electronic greetings, and it runs online auctions and the Internet Movie Database. Amazon.co.uk stocks all the books in print in Britain, and a further 300,000 from America.

Figures like that are forcing the real-life heavyweights online. Tesco offers a home shopping service with delivery to your door, as do most of the big supermarkets. But will they snatch the Internet crown from the likes of Amazon? 'People say either that Amazon will be a great survivor,' says ft.com's Paul Maidment, 'and that in 100 years we'll talk about it like we talk about Harrods, or they say it'll be gone in two years.

'That's a measure of how unpredictable this world is. It's like the car industry when it was starting out – you know that two or three of these companies will be the winners, but it would take a brave person indeed to say it'll be Ford, or Chrysler, or whatever.'

Jeff Bezos, Amazon's founder, is pretty confident. 'We don't want to be the anything of the Internet,' he says recently. 'We'd rather have others trying to be the Amazon.com of something.'

Bezos set the company up in 1994. He'd noticed that Web use was increasing by 2300 per cent a year, and decided to leave his job in Wall Street and become an online retailer. Amazon.com was born and was met with hostility by much of the bookselling world. 'We have 4.7 million titles now,' Bezos says recently, 'and a physical store just can't hold that many, so you can build something online that literally couldn't exist in any other way.' Bezos, 35, recently appeared at number 21 on Forbes' list of the 400 richest Americans – one place below the Rockefellers. His personal fortune is estimated at $7,800,000,000.

WHERE TO FIND THE PEOPLE WHO ARE THE WEB

TRANCE [] CONTROL
www.mp3.com
www.teraxis.se/tc

DALJIT DHALIWAL
www.itn.co.uk
members.tripod.com/~zoam/daljit (The Unofficial Daljit Dhaliwal Appreciation Page)

WEBCAM DIRECTORY
http://members.tripod.com/~Barusa/webcams.htm
www.allcam.com
www.camcity.com
www.camcentral.com
www.webcamworld.com

THE HUNGER SITE
www.thehungersite.com

THE FINANCIAL TIMES
FT.com

THE SPORTING LIFE
www.sporting-life.com

RADIO
www.44k.com
www.etronik.com

SHOPS
www.tesco.co.uk
www.amazon.com
www.amazon.co.uk

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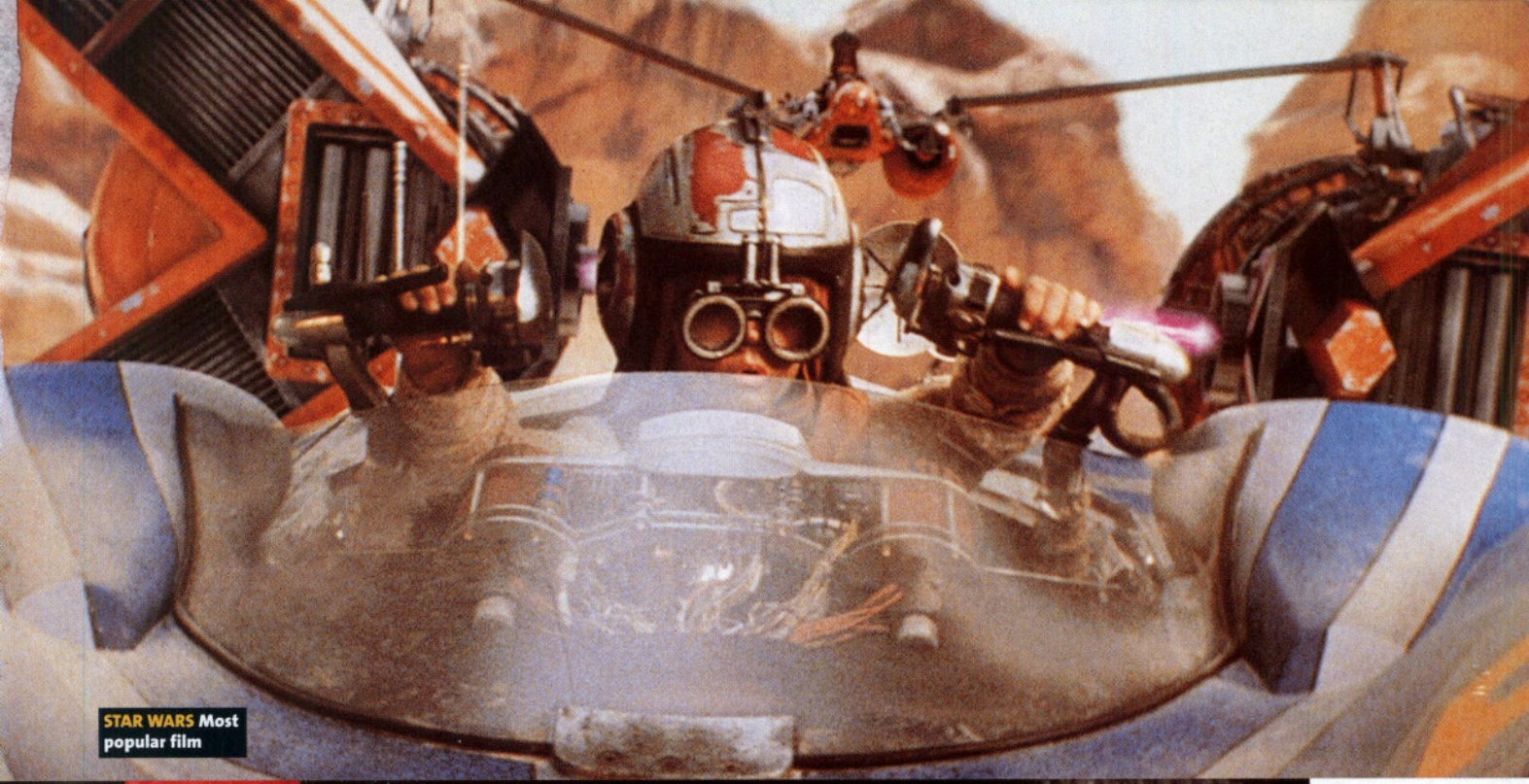
www.cindymargolis.com
http://welcome.to/cindy_margolis

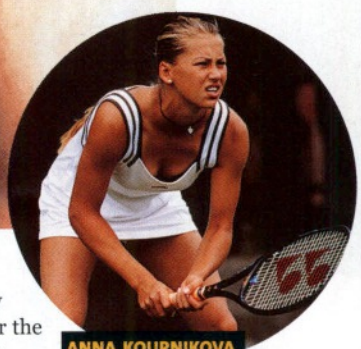
LIBRARIES
portico.bl.uk (The British Library) www.ipl.org (The Internet Public Library)



STAR WARS Most popular film

DAVID BECKHAM Most popular footballer

BLAIR WITCH Third most popular film



ANNA KOURNIKOVA Most popular sportsperson

CINDY'S DOWNLOAD OVERLOAD

While our chart shows that Britons are frantically searching for Pamela Anderson, it's another *Baywatch*-style babe – Cindy Margolis – who's getting the rest of the world hot under the collar. Ms Margolis models, advertises things, and used to co-host *The Price Is Right* in America. The high point of her real-world career might have been playing a fembot in the first Austin Powers movie, but she's skilfully pitched herself at the online audience. In fact, she's in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the world's most downloaded woman. 'It's true,' she tells her 'cyberbuddies' on her site, 'annnnnnd... it's all your fault!:-) A bazillion thank yous!' The most lusted-after man might be Will Smith, but Cindy leaves him standing. She's been downloaded 53 million times.

CINDY MARGOLIS Most downloaded woman

WIRED FOR BOOKS

As the century draws to a close, it's not just babes and bands that are getting online – even a dusty old institution like the British Library is wired. Its only competiton for the title of world's biggest library comes from the Internet Public Library, which was set up in 1995 by a group of students. The British Library Website racks up a million visits a month and, unlike the IPL, it has books (the IPL directs you to online resources) – over 120,000 of them – while an online catalogue allows you to check what's there, reserve it, and arrange a loan, enabling that rare book to turn up at your local branch.

The Web is already a strange alternative world. Within a few years, we'll get films and television online, which will hugely affect video shops and TV stations this side of the modem. And, of course, things will happen that we can't even imagine now. 'If you ask me where I'll be in 6 months,' says Paul Maidment, 'I couldn't tell you, because the technology hasn't been invented yet.'

The few who do imagine it will be the winners. And, with the world available in a strange, distorted, looking-glass way through the Net, there may be no reason to walk away from the computer at all.

This season, British police have already dealt with 20 violent disturbances at football grounds, while international matches are becoming battlegrounds for hooligans. The ugly face of football has reappeared, says David Hurst – and this time round, the thugs are on the Net...

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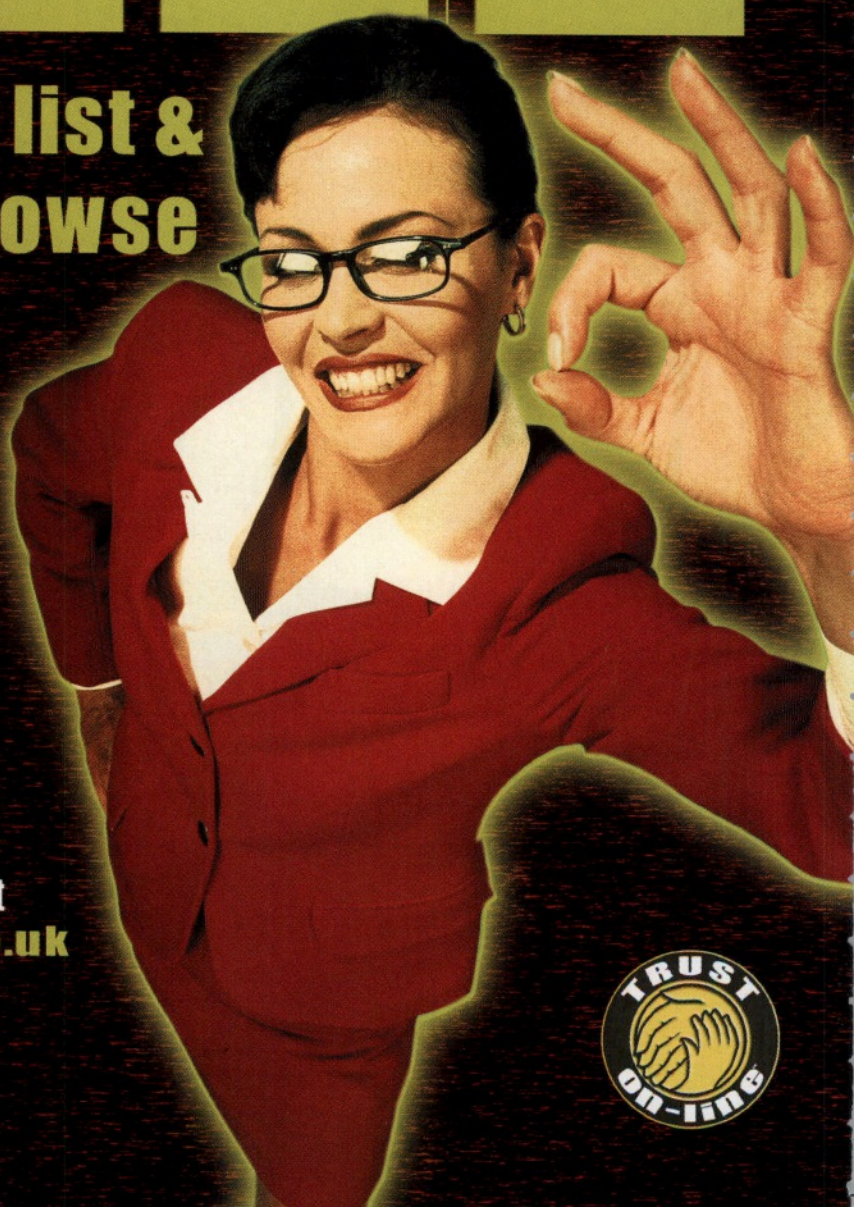

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CHRISTMAS DIRECT

TRUST on-line

IT'S THE OPENING DAY OF THIS year's football season and Dave Rowley is doing what he does best: following his favourite team to an away match. He's been looking forward to this opening fixture since the last season ended. He lives for Saturday afternoons and midweek matches. It's his hobby. 'We're at this bar in the centre of Cardiff where we'd arranged to meet for a drink,' recalls Dave, a 24-year-old labourer from south London, his face turning upwards at the memory of the matchday. 'There's about 100 of us when suddenly this geezer comes running in with his mobile. "They're up the road," he shouts, "about 400-handed and f-----' up for it."

'Next thing we're outside having it toe to toe with all these massive Taffs – windows are going, bottles are cracking on heads, there's a bit of blood and lots of shouting. We're well outnumbered but Millwall give as good as we get and we stand. I booted some bloke like he was a football. Then the Old Bill showed up and spoiled it.'

THE INTERNET
GROWING RESPONSIBILITY

Ask Dave if he's a football hooligan and he'd say that he isn't. He'd say he was fighting for what he believes in, and what he believes in is Millwall Football Club.

The now notorious Cardiff terrace scenes

Football violence is back – and the Net has to take some of the blame

Regardless of what you want to call it, figures over the last couple of seasons show that the ugly face of football-related violence has reappeared, and it's being organised over the Internet. Now, as well as a bottle and knife, a hooligan's weapons are a mouse and an awful lot of mouth.

There have been other incidents of hooliganism this season, some reported on the front and back of the nationals, but most not even mentioned in local papers. The National Criminal Intelligence Service said there were more arrests last season for violence compared to the previous one. The trend looks like continuing, and police chiefs are becoming 'increasingly alarmed' about the number of incidents of thuggery – police have had to deal with more than 20 violent disturbances so far, not including the fallout from the Scotland v England games.

Bryan Drew, head of the NCIS Strategic and Specialist Intelligence Branch, said: 'In August last year, arrests for the more violent football-related offences had shown a marked increase over the previous season. A well-organised hardcore is hell-bent on causing mayhem, using football matches as a cover for its criminal activities.' Football hooliganism is back – and the Net has to take some of the blame.

After the Cardiff versus Millwall fixture – another meeting is set for 4 December – the tabloid newspapers reported how thugs had arranged the violence on the Internet through a Web page set up by Paul Dodd, the Carlisle fan dubbed Britain's 'most notorious hooligan'. His Web site includes a Message Board section on which those who follow football teams – in order to fight for them – taunt each other, arrange 'meets' and swap tales of violent mob disorder at football matches.

The tabloids claimed victory over the thugs when they managed to get the site closed, but a few days later it was back and shutting it down simply had an adverse effect – when some of the football fans who used it realised they were being watched they simply set up new ones. Sites such as ***www.intheknow.com*** and unofficial club chat sites have the potential to gear hooligans up for matches while forming their plans for physical confrontation. The 'English Disease' has, like all the worst bugs, spread, and there's even a site, ***www.geocities.com./colosseum/field/6261/index1.htm***, where hooligans from around Europe can look at pictures showing what other team's fans look like, and see shots of their own 'firms' in fighting action.

MIRROR SPORT MIRROR SPORT MIRROR SPORT

MILL-WAR

1,000 louts on rampage

Hate mob kick keeper

A real match took place last night

A visit to the Paul Dodd site reveals messages containing shining pearls of prose: 'Walked right across a mob of about 150 of your lot coming down from the grassy bank. No disrespect but they were mainly young kids who did not look much, I thought about chinning a couple of them. After the match came out and I saw a small number – about 30 reasonably rough looking geezers. I think they were Gooners. Anyway my mate and I got down to Aston and (thank f---) must have been about 1 minute away from a large mob of MUFC (250?) who came down. We saw the OB herding them away from where we were queuing up for the train that broke down on way back. If you'd broken through you would only have slapped scarfers, although my mate and I would have given a good account of ourselves before dying.'

ALL THE RAGE
FASHIONABLE AGAIN

There's no doubt that, given the publicity, there are now plenty of people visiting the site whose only involvement in football hooliganism is from sitting at home in front of a screen. However, there's also no doubt that hoolisites are playing a major part in organising violence around matches and of making hooliganism 'fashionable' once more.

Ken Chapman, Head of Security at Millwall, acknowledges this. 'The Internet is increasing the hype. You get somebody with a twisted mind who, say, supports Chelsea and they're playing Arsenal next week, so

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HOOLIGANISM THROUGH HISTORY

There's nothing new about violence in football; in fact, the two have gone hand in hand ever since the first pig's bladder was kicked in anger

1700s
In the absence of formal rules, football matches often descend into anarchy as hundreds of players rampage through rural areas on pitches up to a mile long. Biting, punching and lacerating are common; Vinnie Jones is believed to have modelled his career on this era.

1818
A game between public school toffs at Winchester School becomes so unruly the Riot Act has to be read by the army.

1885
First recorded crowd violence, when players were attacked with sticks and stones following a fixture between Preston and Aston Villa.

1923
Wembley's first FA Cup Final sees thousands of ticketless fans storm past officials, swelling the crowd to dangerous levels and delaying kick-off for 45 minutes. Famously, a white horse is used to clear the fan-strewn pitch.

1977
The infamous battle of Wembley, as Scotland fans tear up the national stadium's pitch and smash goalposts. The annual Scotland-England fixture is eventually abandoned in the 80s due to fears of violence.

1985
Rioting fans at the Liverpool v Juventus European Cup Final cause 39 deaths and lead to English clubs being banned from Europe.

1995
The Ireland v England game in Dublin is abandoned as visiting fans rip up seats and throw them onto fans below.

1998
England fans clash with rival supporters during the World Cup in France, jeopardising their country's chances of being awarded the 2006 Finals.

1999
As predicted, trouble flares after the Scotland-England play-off, with fighting in Glasgow city centre leading to 160 arrests.

LINKS

- *www.noviolence.com*
- *www.wypolice.gov.uk/wypolice/football/*
- *www.urban75.com/Footie*

they send a message to an unofficial Arsenal site saying, "We're coming to get you and this is what we're going to do..." and the word gets round.

'Paul Dodd has his own Web site, and that is used just by like-minded individuals. There is organised hooliganism, and people who will be fighting each other one week will be together under the banner of England or one of the home nations the next. It is a culture I've been involved in looking at for 10 years and I still don't understand the complexities of it.'

Former hooligan Jason Shipley, a 34-year-old salesman from Edmonton, north London, used to travel with Tottenham's firm until his throat was slashed during a fight with Coventry's mob in the late Eighties. He needed 15 stitches and the incident, along with two convictions for affray in football grounds, put him off going for a fight. He tells how he realised just how serious things had become and, like a lot of the hooligans of the time, left football and turned to raves and taking ecstasy for his weekly buzz. However, a few years ago he stopped clubbing and slowly returned to watching Spurs.

'I don't row at all now,' says Shipley. 'I've got a wife, kids and a mortgage. What I've noticed in the last couple of seasons, though, is that a lot of the old boys are around again. Even though football is safer to go to and it's changed from the old terrace days, I've seen a few firms appearing again. You can spot them a mile off – no team colours, designer gear like Prada tops, Timberland boots, white Reebok trainers, Armani jackets – the lot. There's a lot of youngsters, early twenties, who are there as well.

'Internet sites are providing more of an outlet for hooliganism because people are reading more about it. In the Eighties, every week there'd be a newspaper report about trouble and that would spur people on. But now you can read about it on the Net and people get fired up on that.

'You can go to any club's unofficial site and hear what fans are saying. Say you're playing Leicester next week, you can practically go and sit in a Leicester pub and listen to them go on, and then come back and gee people up.

'Now you can read about it on the Net, and people get fired up on that'

Sadly, England v Scotland often means one thing

'Even the people who aren't on the Internet will hear it. I've been in a Spurs pub and I've heard people say, "I was looking at a Man United site and they said they were going to bring 100 boys down". Within 10 minutes that's become, "United are bringing a mob of 200 down". Because it's coming off the Net it's like a secret sect, and kids love being involved in things like that.'

THE LEGAL WAY

THE FOOTBALL ACT

The Government and police are so worried by the re-emergence of football aggro that they introduced a new law last September (the Football [Offences and Disorder] Act 1999) that includes tough measures such as not even having to attend a match to be convicted – if people are at a place principally because of a football match and they cause trouble which leads to a conviction they could face a banning order, and banning orders stop an offender going to all matches in the country for a minimum of a year. If someone commits a football-related offence within 24 hours either before or after a match, they also run the risk of a banning order, where they have to report at match times to a specific police station.

Punishments for offences committed abroad have also been toughened up – international bans can now last 10 years and a person has to submit their passport to a police station before key matches.

Assistant Chief Constable Tim Hollis, member of the Association of Chief Police Officers and police spokesperson on football hooliganism, says: 'The police have never been complacent on football hooligans. We can't be. In fact, we actually pointed out that hooliganism was on the up again so that people *didn't* get complacent. Most of the problems take place away from the ground.

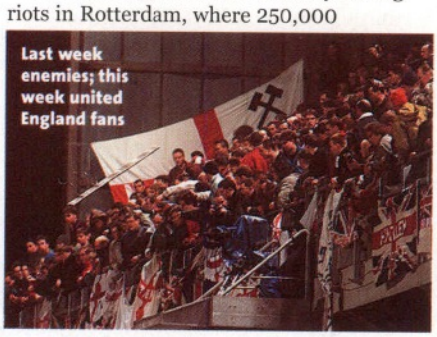
'Around 20 years ago the only way hooligans could communicate was by

New police methods include CCTV cameras

landline telephone, then we had mobile phones and pagers, so yes, now they use the Internet. Obviously we take steps to monitor what goes on there. Those involved in the organisation of hooliganism will utilise whatever technology is to hand. It's making the information more available, but whether it actually increases the problem is a debatable point.

'Granted, we have a reputation in this country and yet, in Belgium last year, two matches that were the equivalent of Premiership games were cancelled because they couldn't guarantee security – if that had happened over here it would have been headline news. And last season the police in Holland actually opened fire on hooligans.'

The shootings occurred last May during riots in Rotterdam, where 250,000


Last week enemies; this week united England fans

Feyenoord fans were celebrating their side's success in clinching the Dutch league title. Six policemen fired live bullets after being attacked by dozens of youths. One victim was hit in the stomach, another shot in the neck and two received leg wounds. It is thought hooligans fired back at the police – bullet holes were found in a window of the Hilton Hotel and, while one gang attacked the police, another broke shop windows and looted goods. Property damage is estimated at up to £3 million.

With considerable experience in dealing with hooliganism, what's the British police force's reaction? Says Hollis: 'Well, European police look to us for advice, but we have never said it's easy, and we've never said we could eradicate it.'

As well as the new law and policing measures such as dogs and horses that have become part of our whole footballing experience, police and stewards infiltrate gangs, have newer methods of capture such as smaller CCTV cameras and are fully trained in dealing with hooligans. They should be – after all, in this country they've had 30 years to prepare themselves.

SunSport SunSport SunSport
MINDLESS!
Hoolie fury at riot yobs

'Young men who like fighting over football haven't gone away'

THE FUTURE

FIGHTING FIT?

Leicester University's John Williams, an expert on football hooliganism and Director of the Centre for Football Research, feels that football hooliganism never really went away. Instead, he believes that it was merely displaced to lower divisions where matches tend to have a less sophisticated policing system, and that the Internet is a caltalyst.

'I do think the Web fires people up,' he says. 'Plus, all the new books about hooliganism indicate that there's a big market for this and that young men who like fighting over football haven't gone away.'

Martin King – author of two books reminiscing about real football-related violence, *Naughty Nineties* and *Hoolifan – 30 Years of Hurt* – once enjoyed fighting at matches. A Chelsea fan, he is still very much 'in the know' of what's going on with today's new football firms and has his own Web site, ***www.hoolifan.com***.

'It is definitely fashionable again,' he says. 'There is a new influx of youngsters jumping on the bandwagon and they seem to be having a good time. On my Web site we had to put up a note saying this is not a meeting place to arrange rows. But there are other ones like Dodd's site where people do arrange a few things.'

However, Millwall hooligan Dave Rowley thinks Dodd's site is past it. 'It used to have some valuable information when it first come out about a year ago, but now I reckon it's [by] students. Still, I probably hear about the decent sites before most people and there are new ones springing up all the time. To be honest, I don't care how the off is arranged as long as it happens.'

TAKE IT OUT ON THE NET

Are you full of rage? Worried you could become a football hooligan? Rather than bottling up that anger for the fortnightly rumble down the North Stand, why not let the Internet take away your pain...

MEASURE YOUR RAGE

The Anger Management site features an anger test, plus a range of self-help tools.

www.angermgmt.com

WATCH OTHERS FIGHT

See the big boys rip into each other at this top pro wrestling site.

www.wrestleline.com

PUNCH BILL GATES

Rather than hitting someone in real life, join the 65,000 people who've already had a pop at Bill.

www.well.com/user/vanya/bill.html

SEEK SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

Let White Deer show you how to perform a ceremonial self-healing.

www.1111gateway.com

www.football365.com

WHAT'S YOUR 365?

CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL
VISA

Banks, but no banks

Banking's balance sheet is undergoing a rapid review of its finances...

FASTER THAN YOU CAN SAY 'TAKEOVERS AND redundancies' the world of banking is changing. Gone are the days of making an appointment with that nice Mr Granger (and it was always a man) for a cosy chat to discuss an increase in your overdraft; gone are the days of branches with thick shag-pile carpeting and dark wood panelling; and gone are the days when 'advances in banking' meant closing times were extended from the laughably early 3.15pm to the daringly late 5.15pm.

In their place comes online banking, taking everyday banking into the next century. Email your bank manager the grovelling request letter instead of grovelling in person, and visit the bank any time you please. So what is this brave new world like? It was 'staff training' which finally made me take the plunge; 9.15am one wet Wednesday found me at the (closed) doors of my local Lloyds TSB, wondering if I'd catch my death standing there, knowing life is too short to spend it waiting for a bank to open.

Settling down at home with a mug of Lemsip, I logged on at the bank's Web site (***www.lloydstsb.co.uk***). It wasn't as easy as I'd hoped – I couldn't get on to the secure part of the site as I was still using an old version of Microsoft Internet Explorer, and all the online banks require more secure encryption – but once I'd downloaded the free upgrade from Microsoft's site (***www.microsoft.com***) I was off.

Once through the hallowed portals of the banking site I filled out a short form, then signed a huge agreement which arrived in the post. Essentially, it said that my bank can charge the fees they want, when they want; and alter the agreement when they want – the usual, then. A covering letter warned I'd have to wait until they'd checked my signature before my service could be activated.

I can only assume that staff training is a particularly high priority at my 'home' branch in central London, because after three weeks my user ID and 'practical

WORDS: RICHARD SIMPSON; PICTURES: STEVE ORINO

TOP BANKING BUYS ONLINE

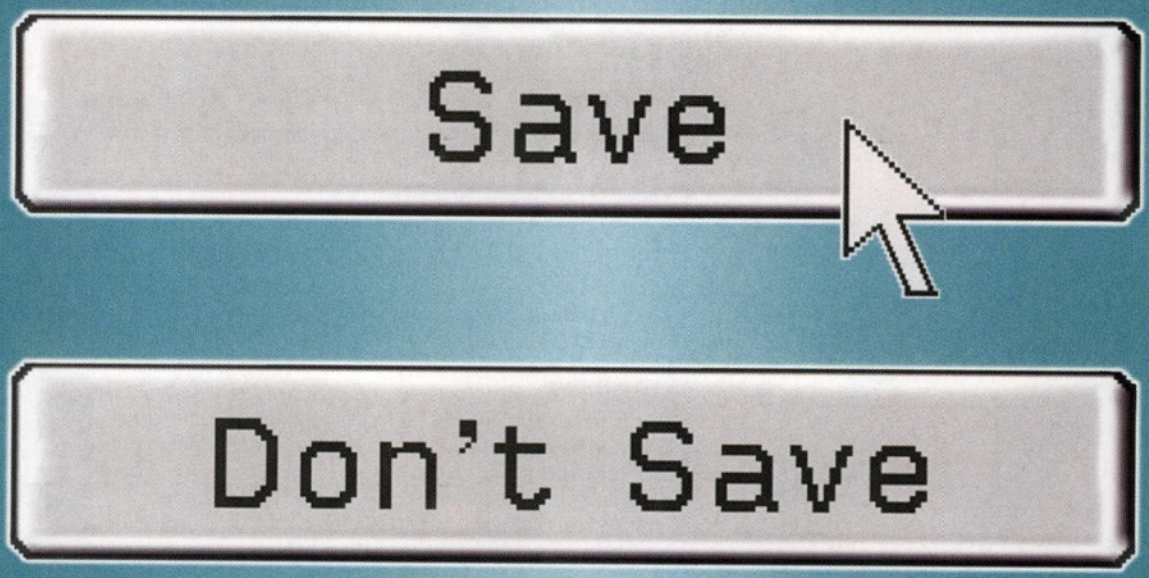
Products available online – below high street prices...

SAVINGS ACCOUNTS:
EGG ***www.egg.com*** and its 6 percent no-notice account is hard to beat. It loses money – so you can make some.

CREDIT CARDS:
HFC BANK ***www.marbles.co*** offers 5.9 percent APR, rising to 14.9 percent after 6 months. Smile has 5.9 percent APR until the end of April, and then 12.9 percent.

SHARE TRADING:
Until 11 January HALIFAX ***www.halifax-online.co.uk*** is offering trading at £5 a deal, rising to £12.50. DLJdirect ***www.dljdirect. co.uk*** is offering all deals free of charge before 14 January.

first-e pays 6.51%AER*, other banks don't – you choose.



The independent internet bank, first-e, exists only on the internet. So we can offer a return of 6.51%AER* interest paid gross every month, with no tax deductions. Open a first-e account, and you'll save time as well as money. Click on and you'll be with us in a few minutes.

first-e the internet bank | the independent internet bank | www.first-e.com

*INTRODUCTORY BONUS RATE OF INTEREST VALID UNTIL 30.04.00. AER – (Annual Equivalent Rate) – A notional rate that illustrates the gross rate as if paid and compounded on an annual basis. The gross contractual rate is the same as the AER. Interest subject to variation. Rate correct as at 05.11.99. Interest is calculated at 0.81% above the first-e base rate. The first-e base rate is 5.50% as at 05.11.99. This offer applies for balances up to £250,000. For balances above this amount please contact us directly. Interest is paid monthly gross of tax provided you have completed the required declaration. Standard transfers normally take 3 days to complete. "first-e the internet bank" is a trademark used by Banque d'Escompte for banking services on the internet. Banque d'Escompte is a French bank, incorporated as a limited liability company, with a paid up capital of 37,500,000 euros (Paris Companies Register No B 702 950 148). Registered Office: 13 Boulevard Haussmann, 75009 Paris, France.

guide' to online banking still hadn't turned up – despite claims that the whole procedure takes just 10 days. After emailing the bank's online enquiry service, a letter arrived saying they'd need a new copy of my signature.

My venture into the brave new world was finally given the all-clear a month later. (Well, Rome wasn't built in a day.) So far...?

So good. It's been useful to check my balance and recent transactions regularly. It also lets me see what fiscal disasters are about to befall the account, which helps with cash-flow management (aka not bouncing cheques). And I can transfer money from one account to another online, saving a few tedious trips to the bank (and greatly reducing my chances of contracting flu).

It has also been educational: two redundant standing orders, which I've tried to cancel over the years, were still there when I first went online. A couple of clicks later and both were gone for good – fingers crossed. All the online account information seems accurate and up-to-date, navigation is intuitive and layout is crisp, if a little dull. In fact the whole system has been quick and robust whenever I've used it.

However, unlike most of the competition, my bank's online service isn't available all the time (it shuts between midnight and 4am each day), but so far I've been able to resist the urge to log on and check my lack of funds at two in the morning.

But despite all the plus points, online banking still isn't totally automated, as I still have to brave those staff training sessions and make the trip to my branch because I still have to pay in old-fashioned cheques. Apart from that, online banking works a treat – mainly because, I suspect, my dealings are straightforward. One of the main concerns, though, is cost. It's been estimated that the overheads of an online-only current account could be just one tenth of the branch-based equivalent, but so far there's no sign of established banks offering incentives to those who choose to bank online. Their reasoning is that, because this is an additional rather than a replacement service, customers shouldn't expect a price-cut.

New online banks will certainly offer cost savings to customers

But that story's getting tired. New online banking entrants will probably have no high street presence and will certainly offer real cost savings to customers. For example, the Co-operative Bank has just launched a current account under its new Smile banner (***www.smile.co.uk***) which promises all the usual functions – plus 4 percent interest on your current account balance. And that is nearly 4 percent more than I'm getting from my bank. Smile also offers customers cheap personal loans (from 8.5 percent APR), and a credit card with a 5.9 percent APR (until April). But even Smile hasn't cracked cheques – you still pay those in.

Judging by the developments in the US, Smile will only be the first of many online banks, and aggressive new entrants will offer equally tempting deals: First-e (***www.first-e.com***) says it will charge just 8 percent on overdrafts when it goes live soon.

What all these new entrants signify is that the existing big banks will have to compete with the new boys, on their terms. Lloyds TSB will be piloting an online-only service next year, while Halifax is starting a new online company, Greenfield.co.

Until people send cheques electronically it's still a matter of making the journey to your local branch, with its smell of damp fivers and hushed conversations. But there's no doubt that the future of banking is online; the branches are shiny and new with no hint of dark wood panelling nor shag pile carpets, and new competition tempts and teases with the promise of cheaper banking. However, although the future may be online, it's not utopia – grovelling for increased overdrafts will still be required.

But not a chance of catching the flu.

CHEQUE LIST

Things to ask when choosing online banking

- Is it a stand-alone online bank or an additional service with your existing account?
- What are the opening hours?
- Is there phone banking if you need to speak to someone?
- Can you set up standing orders, and can you pay bills direct?
- How long does it take cheques to clear?
- Does the account pay interest? Check there's a deposit account, because moving money between accounts is a key advantage of online banking.
- What overdraft facilities are offered?

Form an orderly queue, the cashier will see you shortly

THOSE HIGH STREET BRANCHES ONLINE

BARCLAYS

www.barclays.co.uk

The biggest online banker in terms of customer numbers, but it operates alongside existing branch-based accounts – so no big savings for banking online yet. But they do offer a free ISP, called Barclays.net, so expect the rest to follow.

NATWEST

www.natwest.co.uk

If NatWest has managed to stick to the launch timetable (and managed to stay away from takeover bids) then its online banking service is now up and running, but don't expect it to be very different from the Lloyds TSB or Barclays product.

ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND

www.rbos.co.uk

Another additional online service, although this one allows you to copy your banking data into a wider range of other software than some. They include Microsoft Money, Quicken and SAGE accounting packages.

HALIFAX

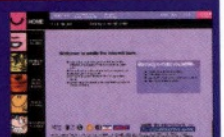
www.halifax-online. co.uk

This site was launched early in October and it links up to the telephone banking service that Halifax offers. Halifax promises that customers will be able to log on and access the site and their accounts round the clock, 24 hours a day.

WOOLWICH

www.thewoolwich.co.uk

The Woolwich is another site that runs alongside the branch-based service, and, like the Halifax site, it offers useful integration with other financial products, such as mortgages, loans, insurance and investments.



CO-OPERATIVE BANK

www.smile.co.uk

Different brand name gives the game away – and this online service beats both the competition and existing Co-op current accounts on price. The current best-buy, with good savings, credit card and personal loan rates.

Retail therapy

Where else could you find a sparky nun next to a Lumibear but in *the net*'s shopping basket?

Football £8.99

Need something to boot around the office – instead of the boss's head? A Euro 2000 ball do you? Pay £2.50 for delivery and allow seven days. ***www.etoys.com***

Smile! camera £39.95

Want to be among the first in the Northern Hemisphere to secure one of these cheesy cameras? Go to Imtechno's New Zealand site, where they sell them (although p&p charges have yet to be decided). Alternatively, a UK site will be up soon. ***www.imtechno.co.nz***

Nux Vom £3.25

Try the homeopathic approach to hangovers this year. Nux Vom seems perfect to us: 'For pain often due to over-indulgence in alcohol. Made worse by movement'. Yup, that's about it. It took two days to arrive, so order in advance of that mega session. ***www.apothecary.co.uk***

T-shirt £20

Fcuk fashion! At the moment, you can only purchase this glow-in-the-dark T-shirt (the logo, that is, not the whole top) at the French Connection site. Delivery costs £3.50 and takes seven days. ***www.frenchconnection.com***

Vacuum £197.99

Apparently your Dyson never quite regains its sheen after use but who cares? It's a design icon. Check out the range at ***www.dyson.co.uk*** and order from Barclay Square. Delivery is free and allow seven days. ***www.barclaysquare.com***

THE NET'S TOP TIPS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

Keep to our simple guidelines, and there's no reason why online shopping should end in a puddle of tears

■ **CHECK THE SITE IS SECURE** A small padlock will appear in the bottom left of your browser to show that you can safely send credit card details through the site. Your Web browser will also tell you whether a site is secure or not when you enter it.

■ **SHOP WITH BRAND-NAME COMPANIES** As with any shopping, you're better off with a company you've actually heard of.

■ **CHECK DELIVERY TIMES AND CHARGES** Companies should tell you the delivery charge if there is one on their site. If you live in the Highlands and Islands or Ireland, you may find that free delivery does not apply.

■ **NEVER SEND ANYTHING BY EMAIL** If a site asks for card details by email, don't oblige. It's far, far easier for emails to be intercepted.

■ **PRINT THE CONTRACT** This is the only permanent record of your purchase, so make sure you keep it, along with your order number and other details. Don't forget: if it's a UK site, you have the same consumer rights as you do in the High Street.

■ **IF IT GOES WRONG, DON'T WORRY** Contrary to scare stories, online shopping is safer and very often cheaper than traditional methods – and it's in the online store's interest to sort any problems out quickly.

PHOTOGRAPHY: NICK WRIGHT

Nunzilla £5.50

At three inches tall she might look harmless enough, but wind her up and stand well back – Nunzilla waddles along breathing fiery sparks at anyone who comes near. Catholicism has never been so much fun. Kitsch and Co deliver in 1-5 days, and postage costs from £3-£6.
www.kitsch.co.uk

Poster $19.75

Movie posters are hugely collectable and it's a lucrative market: an original *King Kong* poster sold in April for $220,000. We got this pre-release *Scream 3* from the Nostalgia Factory a week after ordering – offers accepted.
www.nostalgia.com

Shaving brush £29

Not any old shaving brush, this, you know. It's a Liberty imitation-ebony special, which is why you pay over 30 quid for it once you've included £5 p&p – but it does come with Liberty giftwrap. Delivery took five days. ***www.liberty-of-london.com***

Lumibear £95.50

Don't know if it's any relation to the Gummi Bear, but the Lumibear light is a guaranteed kiddie pleaser, and grown-ups aren't ashamed to have it in their living rooms either (make sure you've got the space for it, though – it stands around two feet high in its bare paws). Delivery costs £9.55 and takes about a week.
www.maelstrom.co.uk

Samsung Yepp £149.99

When it comes to choosing an MP3 player, this has to be among the most stylish. You pay £3.25 for delivery, but get your order into Dixons by noon (weekdays) and you could be down-loading by noon the next working day.
www.dixons.co.uk

You understand your products and market. We understand the Internet. Together we can create a tailored solution for all your E-mail, E-commerce and Internet needs.

With the increasing pace of change in the world of the web, it is easy to feel left out and left behind. But now the right sort of help is at hand.

At Magic Moments we have our own network and our own resources. We provide mission critical Internet services to some of the best known names in business and we can do the same for you - simply, efficiently and cost effectively.

We offer the most comprehensive E-commerce, shopping cart and hosting solutions available and specialise in world-wide domain name registration.

Magic Moments - Our business is to serve you.

Transfer your domain name to our network and start saving today!

Email & Web Hosting Packages:

All our Email and Web Hosting packages also include: domain name registration or transfer, daily backups, Smart UPS and technical support.

ALL packages come with FREE Internet connection which benefits Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children.

Email Packages:

Magic EBasic **£40pa**
- Unlimited Email addresses
- Single Email routing

Price excludes naming authority fees

Magic EPlus **£75pa**
- Unlimited Email addresses
- 10 POP Email boxes
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Multiple Email routing

Price excludes naming authority fees

Email & Web Hosting Packages:

Magic SoHo **£130pa**
- 30 MB web/hosting space
- Unlimited Email addresses
- Single Email routing
- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

Magic Standard **£155pa**
- 50MB web/hosting space
- Unlimited Email addresses
- 10 POP Email boxes
- Multiple Email routing
- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

New NT Hosting Solutions:

Simply add the price below to any of our web hosting packages:

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NT Frontpage, Access, ASP, CGI	£180pa
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- 15 POP Email boxes
- Multiple Email routing
- Unlimited Email autoresponders
- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

£10 from this package is contributed to charitable causes. Charities include: NSPCC, Great Ormond Street Hospital, Imperial Cancer Trust. Details: http://www.magic-moments.com/charity/

Magic Enterprise £255pa

- 100 MB web/hosting space
- Unlimited Email addresses
- 20 POP Email boxes
- Multiple Email routing
- Unlimited Email autoresponders
- SSL secure server
- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

E-commerce Services

E-commerce solutions (including SSL)	from £65 pa

Other Services

Additional web/hosting space (10MB)	£25 pa
Database facilities	from £200 pa
Filemaker Pro database hosting	from £200 pa

Naming Authority Fees

UK domains (.co.uk, .org.uk)	£5
Global domains (.com, .org, .net)	£45
Ireland domain (.ie)	£95

Based on two years fees. Fees are subject to change without notice due to fluctuations in exchange rates.

200+ Countries Available - Call Now!

Freephone: 0808 100 6200 **www.magic-moments.com**

All trademarks and registered trademarks acknowledged. All packages exclude VAT where applicable and are subject to change without prior notice.

That was the Millennium that was

It's been a crazy thousand years; so join us on a rollercoaster four-page ride through the last Millennium, with added links

1041
Winner of Royal Anagram Competition Beheaded

A prize of a week's holiday in Wessex turned to decapitation for unlucky Edmund Thored of Pevensey, Essex. His winning anagram, a jumble of the monarch's name, was deemed offensive by King Hardecanute, who ordered his beheading. ***www.anagramgenius.com***

1088
First Newsreel Pictures from Battle of Hastings

In the French town of Bayeux, ladies sewed day and night to prepare newsreel footage of the invasion of England. The tapestry, the length of a football field, documented the major events of the battle. Viewers were warned there were some disturbing scenes, including graphic images of King Harold's assassination. ***www.ibiscom.com/bayeux.htm***

1119
University Founded in Bologna

A new type of super-school was opened in the city of Bologna. The University offered high-level teaching and research in all aspects of philosophy. Bologna residents weren't so keen on their new neighbours however. Local butcher, Bruno Carpaccio, said: 'Academics? They're nothing more than layabout children. I'm sick of cleaning their sick from the front of my shop.' ***www.unibo.it***

1260
Kubla Khan named as Mongol ruler

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan a stately pleasure dome decree. With ice-skating and rubber ducks and men dressed-up as ladies, koala mince and bonus prints and custard brie O'Grady's. All the bishops washed their socks and toasted halitosis, while Jocks in frocks caressed their locks and roasted purple posies. ©Samuel Taylor Coleridge. ***www.pw.org/khan.htm***

1192
Richard The Lionheart Gave Battle in Jaffa

King Richard led the third crusade against the Saracens in the Holy Lands. His army of 2000 overpowers the 7000 cavalrymen of Saracen leader Saladin. After the battle Richard signed release forms allowing his likeness to be used on the masthead of the *Daily Express*, on the Ford Cortina Crusader and Crusader Crisps packets. ***www.ping.at/kessler***

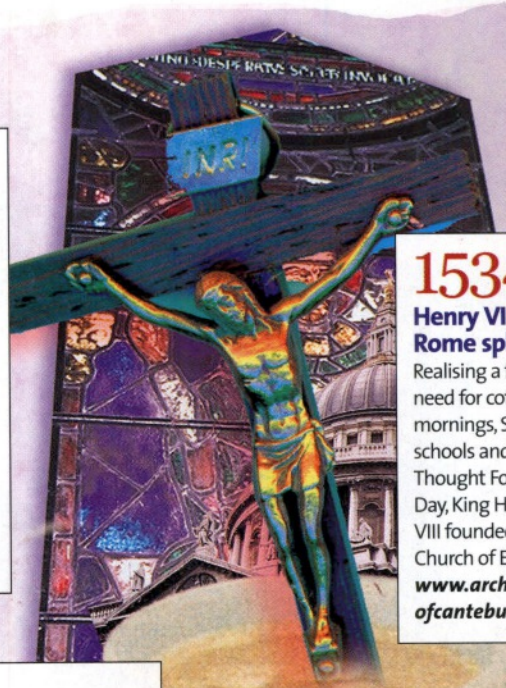
1455
The Bible Printed for the First Time

Johann Gutenburg, the inventor of moveable type, produced the first printed bible. 'I wanted to arm myself with the facts ready for the next time the Jehovah's witnesses come round,' said Gutenburg. ***www.verge.org/press.html***

c1505

The Birth of Psychedelia

The crazy joy of psychedelia was invented in the middle ages. Bakers accidently invented LSD by baking bread using wheat contaminated with the ergot fungus. The 'baker's madness' saw hundreds of innocent women killed for witchcraft and simpleton men being branded geniuses. Hieronymous Bosch was patently off his loaf when he painted this, The Garden of Earthly Delights. ***www.bbc.co.uk/education/bosch***



1534

Henry VIII in Rome split

Realising a future need for coffee mornings, Sunday schools and Thought For the Day, King Henry VIII founded the Church of England. ***www.archbishop ofcantebury.org***

1284

England conquers Wales: Stereophonics disgusted

'It's typical English imperialism,' said Kelly Jones, lead singer of rock group Stereophonics. 'Edward's come over here and taken away our national heritage.' But his father Tom saw it differently: 'I don't really mind so long as he's got a good voice. I'm doing this duets album, see...' ***www. virtualwales.com***

1377

Richard II Crowned King of England

'People of England, I'm King and I can do what I want and sometimes I want to play on the swings and I'm going to play all day. I'm not going to wear my crown today because it's too heavy and the swing might break. I want ice cream, and I want lots of Beanie Babies, but I don't want them to be like the ones in the shops, I want my own Beanie Babies and no one else is allowed to touch them.' Richard II was born in 1367. ***www.sirbacon.org/ links/richard2.htm***

1605

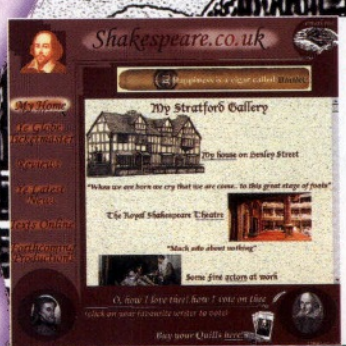
A Guy Called Fawkes Plots Assassination of King

Having been taught the secrets of time travel by his father Wilbur, young Guido Fawkes spent much of his childhood travelling to the twentieth century. He became incensed by the custom of burning effigies of himself on bonfires. When he grew up he decided to put a stop to it. Guessing the government was to blame, Guido went to London from York and planted gunpowder underneath Parliament. Sadly, he didn't realise he was caught in a time paradox. ***web.idirect.com~redsonja/guy/***

1869

Canal Built in Suez, Palindrome-Writers Foiled

By siting his first continent-breaking canal at Suez, engineer Ferdinand deLessups foiled the attempts of palindrome-writers. They hoped he would to build a canal at Panama which would give them the palindrome: 'A man, a plan, a canal, Panama!' Instead they were left with the inelegant: 'Zeus! Make canal, 'la nace kam' Suez!' ***www.lethsuez.com***



1599

Shakespeare discovers Acid House

William Shakespeare was always trying new ways of exciting his audience, so it's no surprise that in 1599 the Bard went Balearic, as this Hamlet quotation proves: 'Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh; see that unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth blasted with ecstasy.' ***shakespeareweb.tripod.com***

1851

Government Questioned over Escalating Dome costs

The controversial dome, being built on derelict land near the London suburb of Dulwich, was rapped by newspapers of the day. The 'Crystal Palace' dome was built for the Great Exhibition, the forerunner of today's Ideal Home Show. ***www.victorianstation.com/palace.html***

1901
Queen Victoria Dies

The Queen, who was also the CEO of the largest theme-pub chain in Britain (operating under the 'Queen Victoria' and 'Victoria' brands), died after 64 years on the throne. She was succeeded by Edward VII, who brought the twin innovations of fruit machines and alcopops to the public house sector.

www.ni85.dial.pipex.com

1917
Revolution in Russia – A New Pin-Up is born

With his smart goatee and elegant chrome-dome, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, leader of the Russian Revolution, announced his plan for world domination. 'I hope my face will adorn the walls of student dormitories throughout the world,' said the beetroot-eating socialist.

www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/index.htm

1932
The Jacuzzi is born

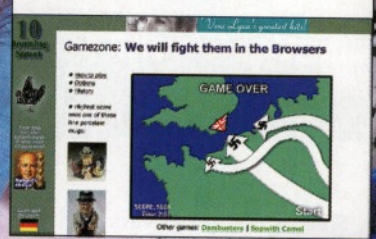
A group of French-Canadian friends would take weekly hot-tub baths in Montreal. In March 1932, Henri Brechout developed the game 'J'accuse.' When a gaseous emission caused bubbling, Henri would point at a suspect and shout 'J'accuse.' The game became known as 'Jacuzzi.'

www.jacuzzi.com

1945
New Born Babies Re-faced as Part of Victory Celebrations

In honour of the wartime Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, it was decreed that all new-born babies should be born in his image. Fortunately, the Churchill drugs, administered by doctors immediately after birth, lost their potency when the infants reached toddling age. 'Ooh, 'e looks just like Winston Churchill' became the phrase of the year.

www.winstonchurchill.org



1929
Human Beings 'Not Made of Rubber' Claim

Finding their work rate greatly reduced by the Stock Market Crash, bored New York stockbrokers took to staging bouncing competitions from windows at the top of skyscrapers. Their uncomfortable discovery that human bodies are not made of rubber proved fatal.

www.nyse.com

1922
James Joyce writes Ulysses

The Irish novelist James Joyce claimed to have expanded the boundaries of the form with the release of Ulysses. To this day nobody has been able to verify this claim as too few people have got further than the first page to provide a reliable sample.

www.joycean.com

1982
New Channel Launched to help Mail Circulation
The *Daily Mail* was running short on material for its traditional reactionary knee-jerk leader columns. In response to this shortfall, a new television channel was launched to provide pornographic, blasphemous and satanic material not available on the mainstream channels. Unfortunately, because of a strike by the National Union of Pornographers, Channel 4's first broadcast was the anodyne quiz show, *Countdown*. ***www.channel4.co.uk***

1990
Spitting Image Puppet Appointed PM
After the success of the Poll Tax, Margaret Thatcher left Number 10. She wasn't replaced by a human but by John Major, star of puppet show *Spitting Image*. Thatcher claimed she slept only three hours a night. Research has found sleep deprivation leads to paranoia and delusions of grandeur.
www.maggie-thatcher.freeserve.co.uk

1963
Television News Reaches New Low
America was shocked by the insensitive interview of Jaqueline Kennedy by ABC anchor Jim Nyquil. The questions included 'How do you feel?' and 'Where were you the day Kennedy died?'
www.johnkennedy.com

2000
Mahir Cagri becomes UN Secretary General
His messages of peace and love struck a chord with the Internet public. Two thousand years after another man from the Middle East made an impression on the world, sex-loving, ping-pong-playing, accordionist-journalist Mahir Cagri became Secretary General of the United Nations. Cagri said he was thrilled by his new position and hoped it would make him many lady friends.
mahir.4mg.com

1953
New Zealander conquers Tibetan Mountain
A 29,000ft mountain of glass, a monument to Tibet's crippled double glazing industry, was climbed by New Zealander Edmund Hilary in his Sherpa van (nicknamed Tensing Norgay). He is believed to be the first person to reach the summit of Mount Everest.
www.everestnews.com

1971
Decimal Lunacy hits Britain
The so-called 'common sense' decimal system replaced the natural and intuitive British currency. Instead of an easy-to-understand system of Pounds, Shillings and Pence and the sub-categories of farthings, sovereigns and crowns, a mystical system of Pounds and Pence was introduced. The public took years to adjust to a system in which 100 pence equalled one pound.
www.numis.co.uk

1997
Media Princess Killed: Media to Blame?
Postmodernism reached its zenith when the death of Diana, Princess of Wales was reported by the world's media. Hours of television and thousands of column inches of newsprint were devoted to the question: 'Is the media to blame?'
www.dianageneration.org

WORDS: JAMES SNODGRASS; ILLUSTRATION: ANDY WELTE; WEB PAGES: SOPHIA GILL, RUE TURNER

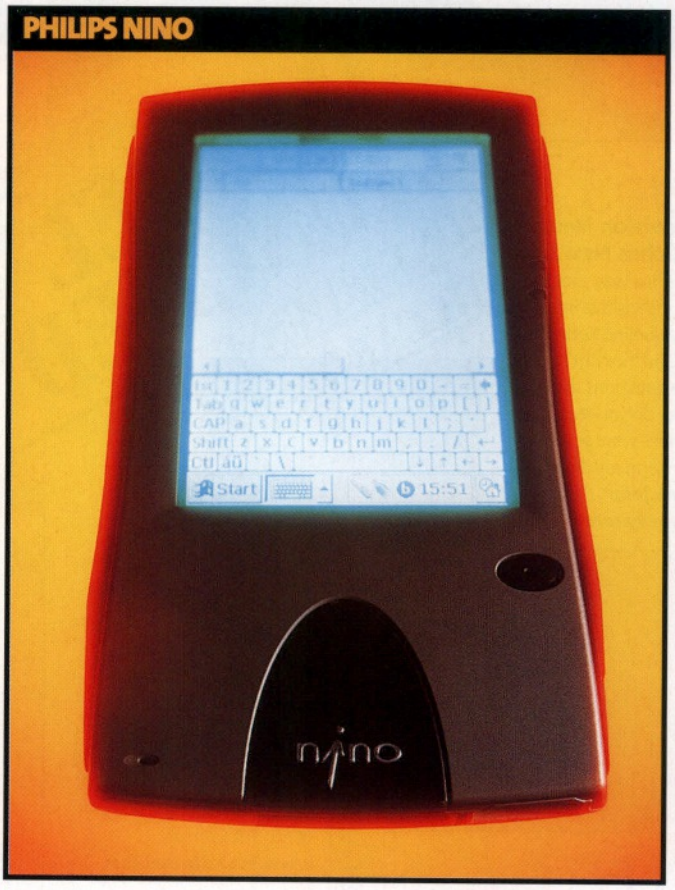
PALM POWER

PDAS CAN BE LIKE GYM MEMBERSHIP – YOU FORK OUT BUT NEVER USE IT. BUT PICK THE RIGHT ONE AND IT'LL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

A PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANT IS the PA in your pocket, it's the key to a new life and existence of organised, fulfilled work and play with no missed appointments, lost phone numbers, or double-booked lunches. At least that's the theory.

In practice, whichever PDA you choose can help put a bit of order into the chaotic jumble of modern life but, realistically for many people, all that stuff about organisers, address book, and to do lists is just an excuse to justify buying today's top toy.

Nothing wrong with that of course, and PDAs do represent the state-of-the-art in >



Compaq Aero 2100
Price £340

★★★

Compaq was aware of the need to build a USP into the Aero that even the spotty sales oiks could pick out and point to. That USP is (cue drumroll): sound. A single earpiece that contains a microphone, like a hands-free phone kit, allows you to take voice notes (with an impressive range of quality/compression settings) and listen to Web audio.

Otherwise the deal is basically the same as with all other PDAs, although of course it does have a colour screen, the benefits of which we reckon are questionable (see Nino review right). Whether PDAs are based on Windows CE (like the Aero), EPOC or Palm OS, the address book, notepad, calendar, email and browser functions are all there, but remember you'll still need an external modem (or modem-equipped mobile phone) to get online for the latter.

The cradle makes synching simple and the rechargable battery means you shouldn't have to fret about your pal shutting down on you.

JUST THE FACTS PLEASE

RATING ★★★

PROS AND CONS Audio is a real pluspoint; colour screen isn't. Slimmer than the Nino but still chunkier than a Palm.

www.compaq.co.uk

Philips Nino
Price £POA

★★★

I tried hard to like the Nino, but it's hard to see what it offers beside that colour screen. Satisfyingly silver it may be, but even its best friends wouldn't call it sleek. When Palms get together and ask 'who ate all the pies?' poor old Nino knows who they're talking about.

The Nino also suffers from the continuous problem of Windows CE for pen systems. Sure it looks like Windows, but that just lulls you into a false sense of security until you realise that your key combos are out the window and you have no idea of how to close anything down. On the plus side, the character recognition will make more sense of your scribbles than you ever could.

As for its colour screen? Why? Well, you could argue that since the Nino has got a PC card slot (big brownie points there – think PC card modem), it can have vast expansion potential courtesy of Clik! drives or flash memory cards. But I still can't see anyone using it to view graphics, and *Quake* is out of the question.

JUST THE FACTS PLEASE

RATING ★★★

PROS AND CONS It might be in glorious technicolor, but it's too thick to trouser. Pretty good hand-writing recognition, though.

www.philips.com

Palm Pilot Palm V
Price £299.99

★★★★★

If you don't understand why this is top dog, then you clearly haven't held one. Oh they may have the Palm VII in the States, but its radio signals bar it from the UK and for the time being the V is still the last word. On the downside, you'll find that you have to learn to use the character recognition software, Graffiti, on its terms not yours, but die-hard users insist that once mastered it more than repays the effort.

It's not colour and it doesn't play MP3s (if that's what you want then buy the HP Jornada 430se, as seen in the forthcoming 007 film) but when it comes down to the daily grind of jotting down deadlines to miss and lunches to blow out, then the Palm does it and does it well.

So what does the V do that the III doesn't? Erm, did we mention how nice it is to hold? Let's be honest, the price hike for the V is sustainable just for the fact that it's that much slimmer, and that much better looking. Less, as they say, is more.

Best buy!

JUST THE FACTS PLEASE

RATING ★★★★★

PROS AND CONS Great looks, easy to use and extremely competent at those day-to-day tasks, but no good for spreadsheeting.

www.3com.com

Psion 5 MX
Price £429.95

★★★★★

The elder statesmen in the PDA world, the MX incarnation spices things up with a faster processor, more memory and, of course, a silver flash to signify this year's model.

If the 5 is an oldie, it's because it's a goodie – some years after its debut it still has by far the best keyboard of any machine in its class, and for some that alone is reason enough to choose it. Psion's EPOC operating system was purpose-designed for pocket devices, while still allowing you to swap files to and from your PC via a serial cable.

Best of all you can spreadsheet and type to your heart's delight for a couple of weeks before having to swap the AA batteries. Be warned, however: as a PDA it now looks hefty – and even if you don't mind ruining the lining of your Armani, you still risk cracking the glass screen if you carry it around in your pocket.

If you're looking for a laptop you can pocket, and one that's easy on the fingers, then it's unbeatable. If you just want an address book, then the 5 can be a costly and unwieldy way of going about it.

JUST THE FACTS PLEASE

RATING ★★★★★

PROS AND CONS Full-blown computing with great keyboard in paperback size, even if it's starting to look hefty.

www.psion.com

Nokia Communicator
Price £350

★★★★

In a class of its own just because it's the only device here that packs the killer punch – it doesn't just let you *write* emails on the way to the office, it can send them there and then, without the need for a PC card modem, infra-red links to a modem-equipped moby or a synch line connection to a PC.

But the Communicator, a fine piece of technology, is seemingly damned to be a techno talking point, a curiosity rather than a must-have. It is something that's neither fish nor fowl and, though it's a great idea and takes away the need for both phone and PDA, most of us remain unwilling to trade in our two existing devices for their one. Many also hang off from buying because there remains a suspicion that Nokia is working on a next generation version which is bound to be both smaller and sexier – and you'll want it.

The Communicator's great hope is that if WAP (wireless application protocol) takes off and the Web delivers services to phone/browsers, then this will get a new lease of life.

JUST THE FACTS PLEASE

RATING ★★★★

PROS AND CONS The four stars are for effort: great idea; true comms/PDA combo but a bit of a brick as a mobile phone.

www.nokia.com

WORDS: STEVE SHIPSIDE; PHOTOGRAPHY: IAN NOLAN

grown-up toys. These days they even include games and are starting to appear with MP3 music players built-in, such as the Hewlett Packard Jornada 430se, one of the gadgets featured in the current James Bond movie, *The World is Not Enough* (see *the net*, December, Be Like Bond, p42).

COME UP AND SEE MY PDA

As well as playtime appeal, appearance plays a big part in most people's choice; you only have to see the businessmen brandish their PDAs in first-class carriages to realise that for many the mark of a good machine is the reaction it provokes when it first appears. And you certainly don't have to tell the manufacturers that, with a huge emphasis put on a PDA's style and design.

Like football strips, these things get subtly updated every year – even if it's only cosmetic – so that the premier league posers can prove they're on the ball. All of which is well and good but, take it from us (among the most disorganised individuals on the planet), while looks and fondle-factor quite rightly help shape opinion, unless you get a PDA that really suits your needs, something that you will happily take with you and enjoy using, it will soon be rotting in the sock drawer. Pick the right one, however, and in a few months you'll wonder how you ever got through the week without it.

We picked a clutch of devices that are available now – a mixture of keyboard and pen-based computers – and lived with them for the best part of two weeks. By the way, in case you're wondering why the much talked about Palm VII isn't here, unfortunately the radio signals it uses are banned in the UK.

Psion Revo
Price £299.95

★★★★

Because the 5 represents overkill for many PDA users, Psion unveiled the Revo – a 'lifestyle choice'. It loses the 5's keyboard and backlighting, but gains true pocketability (it's slim enough to slip into the pocket of your Jermyn Street button-down Oxford) and we found it easy to read in all but near dark conditions.

It retains the slickness of the EPOC system and looks snappier than its big brother, while having a professional air (no one in the meeting will know that you're just playing games on it) and getting around the address book, making lists and using the calendar is a breeze. The Revo is touted as a communications device since not only can you prepare emails prior to sending them from your PC (as you can with all the PDAs here), but it also has a nifty infra-red modem option and the Psion browser (usable if not perfect). However, the costs of those added to the purchase price means it looks less of a bargain.

It will replace your Filofax, but in our book the Palm V still beats it on pose factor.

JUST THE FACTS PLEASE

RATING ★★★★

PROS AND CONS Slim for its sophistication and fatter and smarter than a Palm. Nifty infra-red modem option.

www.psion.com

HP Jornada 620
Price £500

★★★★

Falling in between the Jornada 430se and the impressive sub-notebook-sized Jornada 830 machines, the 620 ends up in a mid-ground slogging it out with small computers rather than PDAs.

Of this selection, its undoubted rival is the Psion 5 and comparisons are inevitable. Both are full-blown computers, aimed at allowing you to run a business while on the hoof. And both have a (strikingly similar) voice note function so you can use them for dictation. The Jornada, however, wins out by including both a PC card slot (for modems, removable storage, etc) and a colour screen from which Windows CE glows happily. However, having had the benefit of both to choose from, I always reach for that Psion 5 as I dash out the door. The Jornada's screen is great, but it comes in a bigger package and the keyboard pales next to the Psion's. It is hard not to think that if you want a true business machine then you should move up to a sub-notebook, and if you want a PDA, then you should look at the lighter options.

JUST THE FACTS PLEASE

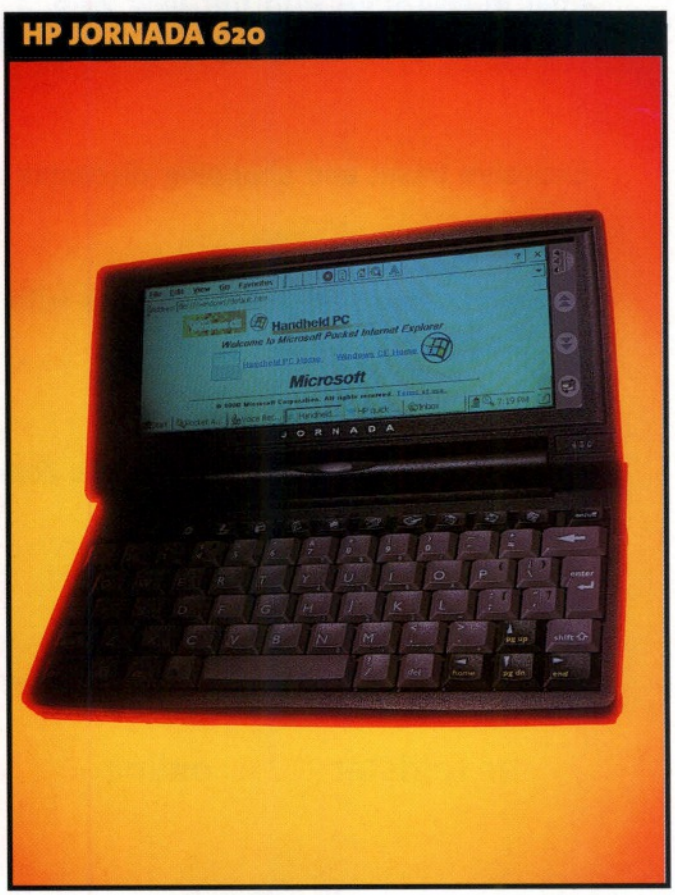
RATING ★★★★

PROS AND CONS Most powerful computer in the line-up but not quite a PDA and not quite a sub-notebook.

www.hp.com

PSION REVO

HP JORNADA 620



CAN A PDA CHANGE YOUR LIFE?

Possibly, but it's a case of you get out what you put in, says our guinea pig

We took one standard issue, frenetically busy, high-powered, modern woman – Laurie King, a Senior Multimedia Producer – and gave her the pick of our PDAs. We checked in a week later to see if the PDA she chose had become an ally or had been consigned to the toy box...

'Anything that promises to help tame the daily tangle of meetings, deadlines and emails is more than welcome, though initially I suspected that PDAs were just gimmicks. Since I use a laptop for serious business on the move I just wanted an organiser, and opted for a Palm V as it's slimline enough to carry at all times.

'It becomes clear that how much you get out of these things is down to how much you put in. The first step is remembering to use the PDA rather than commit things to memory, which is why look and feel are important – if it's a pleasure to get the PDA out then you'll use it more. Things like appointments and 'To Do' reminders build up naturally, but you have to put time into filling out things like the address book. Getting used to the Graffiti character input took a while, too, though it's worth the effort to learn.

'Best points? Bringing everything together in one place plus, as I get used to synching with my PC's calendar it looks like it'll help cut down on being treble-booked. I love the look of it, too.

'So would I use one? Certainly – in fact, I've just got one of my own.'

MUCH MORE THAN JUST FREE INTERNET ACCESS

- **RocketTalk**
  An Internet 1st - send and receive instant voice messages via your PC!
- **PING!**
  Chat in real time with our new Web based instant messaging
- **Shopping**
  Exclusive travel and shopping discounts
- **Money**
  Track your own personalised shares with our unique My Portfolio
- **Kids**
  Boredom-busting, action packed Kids Zone
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  Britain's liveliest online community
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  Goal Flash delivers the latest scores to your desktop as they happen!
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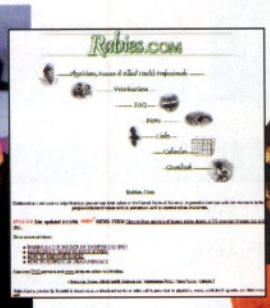
Local calls apply

what website?

January 2000

YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO THE BIGGEST, BADDEST SITES ON THE NET



EVERYTHING WORTH SEEING ONLINE. WICKED

SHOW ME THE SITES...

What Website?

JANUARY

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

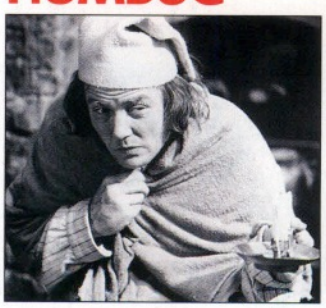
With the arrival of Christmas comes not only obese geese and partridges in pear trees, but also the opportunity to spend hours of your holiday surfing the Web. With What Website? you'll do less searching and more enjoying – and our site (below) is the icing on the cake

www.whatwebsite.com

EVERY LINK ON ONE GREAT SITE!

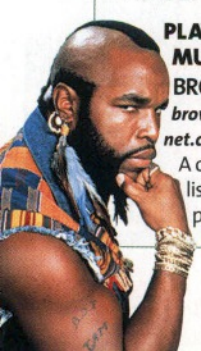
Eager to see the sites featured in this month's listings, but tired of typing endless Web addresses? Well, just tap in ***www.whatwebsite.com*** and you'll find a link to every site. But you will need a password to enter, and this month it's...

HUMBUG



THE FREE SOFTWARE STARTER PACK

THE ULTIMATE HELP BUTTON ***www.thenetmag.co.uk/helpbutton*** Our online guide has all the essential free software reviewed and rated with links



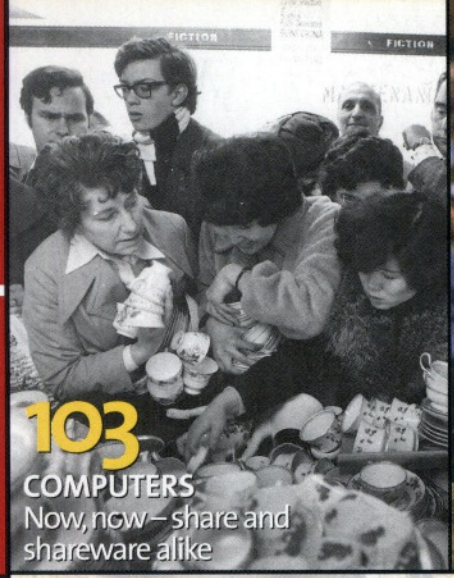
PLAYING MULTIMEDIA BROWSER WATCH
browserwatch.internet.com/plug-in.html
A comprehensive list of browser plug-ins.

REALPLAYER G2
www.real.com
Cross-platform free software for streaming movie (RealVideo) and audio (RealAudio) files across the Internet.

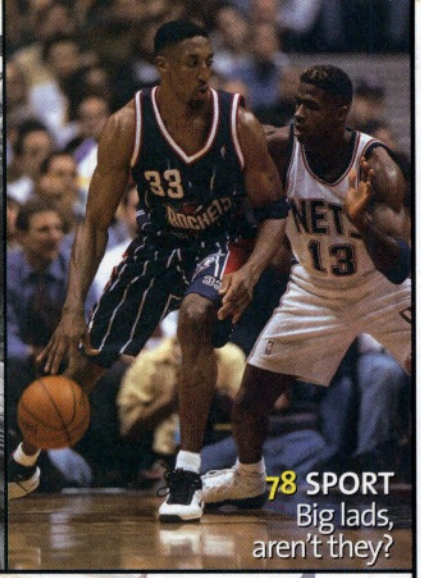
QUICKTIME 4.0
www.apple.com/quicktime
Version 4 of this multimedia software will play just about anything, including MP3 files.

MICROSOFT MEDIAPLAYER
www.microsoft.com/mediaplayer
Plays streaming audio and video files saved in the MediaPlayer format.

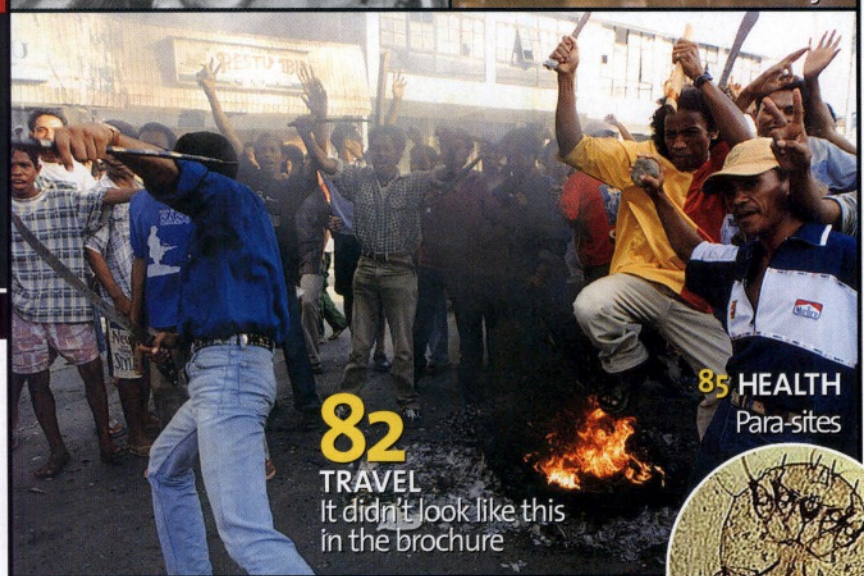
SHOCKWAVE & FLASH
www.shockwave.com
A must-have if you want to enjoy sound, great animation effects and even natty games on Web sites.



103 COMPUTERS
Now, now – share and shareware alike

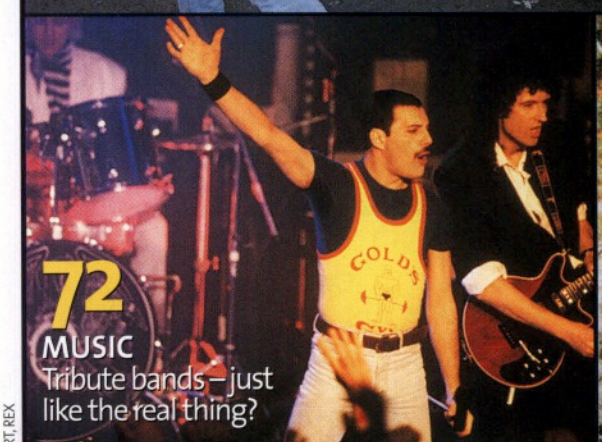


78 SPORT
Big lads, aren't they?

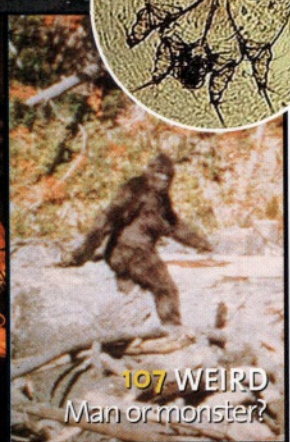


85 HEALTH
Para-sites

82 TRAVEL
It didn't look like this in the brochure

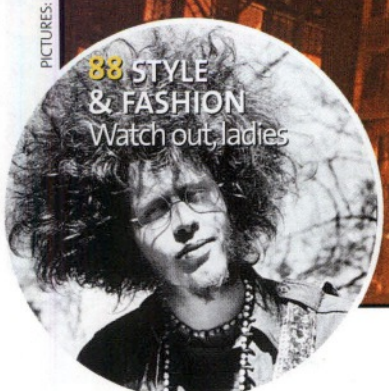


72 MUSIC
Tribute bands – just like the real thing?



107 WEIRD
Man or monster?

66 MOVIES
It's a disaster



88 STYLE & FASHION
Watch out, ladies

PICTURES: RETNA, WALT DISNEY COMPANY, ALL SPORT, REX

THE LISTINGS

JANUARY 2000

NEW MOVIE RELEASES 64
Dum dum dum da dum, Inspector Gadget...

MOVIES DISASTER FILMS 66
'It's no use – we're all going to die'

TELEVISION 69
Come on down; it's the best quiz shows

NEW ALBUM RELEASES 70
Will Santa put some songs in his sack?

MUSIC TRIBUTE BANDS 72
Just like the real thing. Sometimes

CELEBRITIES 75
Shut up, fool, I'm Mr T and I'm online

SPORT BASKETBALL 78
Shooting hoops through the Net

SPORT PLAYGROUND 81
Go back to those halcyon schooldays

TRAVEL 82
The most dangerous trips on earth

HEALTH 85
Diseases you really don't want

STYLE AND FASHION 88
Sort your hair out online before you go and face the real world

MONEY 91
You've made a fortune – now spend it

HOMES AND GARDENS 95
Take a virtual tour of your dream house

ANIMALS 97
Visit a zoo without risking bite marks

LEARNING 98
Bone up with online encyclopedias

GAMES 101
Championship-winning sport sims

COMPUTERS 103
Shareware and share alike

WEIRD 107
Is it a bird? Or is it a Yeti ?

NEED TO KNOW 108
Holding your hand through the Web maze that is the World Wide

Festive turkeys – and crackers

MOVIE RELEASES Don't bother with *Inspector Gadget*; why not check out some retro hair action instead?

Cinema Paradiso

Philippe Noiret, Salvatore Cascio

★★★★

A warm-hearted drama from director Giuseppe Tornatore, this was first released a decade ago and now returns to remind us how good it is. Set in a Sicilian village, the film details the friendship between fatherless Salvatore and projectionist Alfredo, setting the relationship against their beloved Cinema Paradiso. Funny and touching, this will bring out the softy in even the toughest of you.

Dogma

Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Linda Fiorentino, Chris Rock ★★★★

Thanks to some particularly choice casting, *Clerks* director Kevin Smith looks set to upset religious groups. Those with a more balanced perspective, however, should get a big kick out of this one. Affleck and Damon play angels exiled to earth who discover a loophole that might return them to Cloud 9, although there's a possibility that they'll undo existence while they're at it. Novel and irreverent, with some wonderfully daft moments.

www.dogma-movie.com

Lively Flash site with a sense of humour and lots of features – check out the hate-mail from religious nuts.

Cinema Paradiso: not exactly a laugh-a-minute

End of Days

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Gabriel Byrne, Robin Tunney

★★★★

Arnie kicks some evil butt in this thriller, a full-blooded tribute to violence from director Peter Hyams. Satan (Byrne) hits New York, hungry for a mate to bear his Hell spawn – fair enough. Then along comes Arnie as an ex-cop who struggles to prevent Armageddon by killing for our viewing pleasure. It's sick and exceedingly dark, and peppered with Satanic rituals and impressive special effects. This one has it all.

www.end-of-days.com

Devilishly inventive site, with some great features including a historical time-line of evil events.

Fantasia 2000

★★★★

Uncle Walt made what amounted to the world's first music video way back in 1940, and apparently he always intended for *Fantasia* to be tinkered with. Just *The Nutcracker Suite* and *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* remain, both fully remastered. New

Mystery Men

Ben Stiller, William H. Macy, Hank Azaria, Geoffrey Rush ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Superhero wannabes try to save their city from a dastardly villain in this crazy adventure. They might be free of super powers, but the Mystery Men's intentions are admirable; from the irritable Mr Furious to farting whirlwind The Spleen. It's wacky, packed with jokes, and enthusiastically played by the cast: the best hero movie in ages.

www.mysterymen.com

There's lots to see at this colourful, comic book-style site.

With hair like that, the world is safe

music includes Beethoven's *Symphony No 5* and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, set to stunning new visuals which will leave you completely breathless.
www.fantasia2000.com
Visually impressive but, sadly, off-puttingly difficult to navigate.

Inspector Gadget

Matthew Broderick, Rupert Everett, Joely Fisher ★
Inspired by a cartoon that wasn't really all that special to begin with, this lifeless comedy stars the bland Broderick as a crime-fighting cross between RoboCop and a Swiss army knife. As Riverton Police Inspector Gadget, Matt learns to cope with the 14,000 devices built into his robotic frame, while Rupert Everett hams it up as camp villain Claw. Packed with product placement and self-referential humour, this has one gadget too many.
disney.go.com/Disney Pictures/gadget/index.html
Great site with games, clips and pics; shame about the movie.

Sharon Stone: why the clothes?

October Sky

Jake Gyllenhaal, Chris Cooper, Chris Owen, Laura Dern ★★★★
Stirring biopic detailing the early life of NASA scientist Homer Hickam, set in a small town at the beginning of the space age. Inspired by Sputnik, Hickam (Gyllenhaal) resolves to build his own mini rocket, and with help from his friends soon earns a reputation as a dreamer. Constantly at odds with his narrow-minded father (Cooper), Hickam struggles against all the usual odds in this moving film.
www.universalpictures.com/octobersky/
Interviews and trailers make this an interesting, if not very lively, site.

The Iron Giant

Harry Connick Jr, Eli Marienthal, Jennifer Aniston *(voices)* ★★★★
Warner Brothers prove that they can sock it to us with this sophisticated adventure, based on a poem by Ted Hughes. Packed full of fabulous 50s detail, the movie details an amnesiac robot's unlikely friendship with a little boy in a Maine fishing village. It's funny and exciting, with a minimum of sentiment: something for everyone, in fact.
www.irongiant.com
Dazzling design with stacks of info.

Dogma: fatwa's your lot, folks

The Muse

Albert Brooks, Sharon Stone, Andie MacDowell ★★
Albert Brooks is smart: he writes, he directs, he acts, and the results are usually pretty good. That is, until his latest, which is watchable but not nearly as amusing as it thinks it is. Ironically, Brooks plays a screenwriter who's lost his edge. Desperate for help he employs a muse (Stone) for inspiration. Take it or leave it.
www.themusemovie.com
Pretty average content, with audio and video.

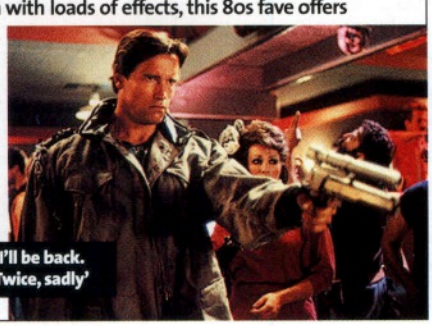
Train of Life

Lionel Abelanski, Rufus, Clément Harari ★★★★
Train of Life even eclipses award-winner *Life is Beautiful*, thanks to director Radu Mihaileanu's touch, finding humour in the horror. Inspired by the village idiot, an Eastern European village flees the Nazis in a fake deportation train, disguising themselves as deported victims, train mechanics and Nazi officers. And that's just for starters...
www.paramountclassics.com/train/index.html
Mostly educational, with fascinating information about the Holocaust.

CLASSIC MOVIE

THE TERMINATOR

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Michael Biehn, Linda Hamilton (1984)
Arnold aims to obliterate the human race in this early James Cameron flick. A mind-messing film with loads of effects, this 80s fave offers uncompromising action and a emotionless performance from our favourite man-mountain. And it was the first time we heard 'I'll be back.'
mars.spaceports.com/~t2/
Audio, video, games and scripts at the ultimate Terminator resource. You'll be back...


'I'll be back. Twice, sadly'

Now showing at your local shop...

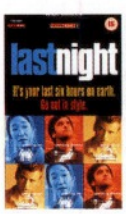
VIDEO RENTALS Sci-fi and thrillers for your TV

CRUEL INTENTIONS

Sarah Michelle Gellar, Ryan Phillipe, Reese Witherspoon
Sarah makes a dangerous wager that horny step-brother Ryan won't be able to get his hands on Reese's pieces. This is an attractive and enjoyable, but non-essential, contemporary teen remake of *Dangerous Liaisons*, this time set in Manhattan. To buy.
www.cruelintentions.com

ENTRAPMENT

Sean Connery, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Ving Rhames
Hit-and-miss flick bearing more than a passing resemblance to *The Thomas Crown Affair*. Zeta-Jones delivers some excellent close-ups with Connery doing his usual thing. To rent.
www.foxmovies/entrapment/



LAST NIGHT

David Cronenberg, Sarah Polley, Sandra Oh
Smart end-of-the-world drama from writer/director/actor Don McKellar. See how Canadians handle the last six hours of life. To rent.
www.lastnight.net

STAR TREK: INSURRECTION

Patrick Stewart, Brent Spiner, F. Murray Abraham
Odd numbered Treks are usually pretty weak, and this ninth entry is no exception. Picard and crew turn renegade to protect a bunch of friendly immortals in this watchable but entirely bog-standard adventure. To buy.
insurrection.startrek.com

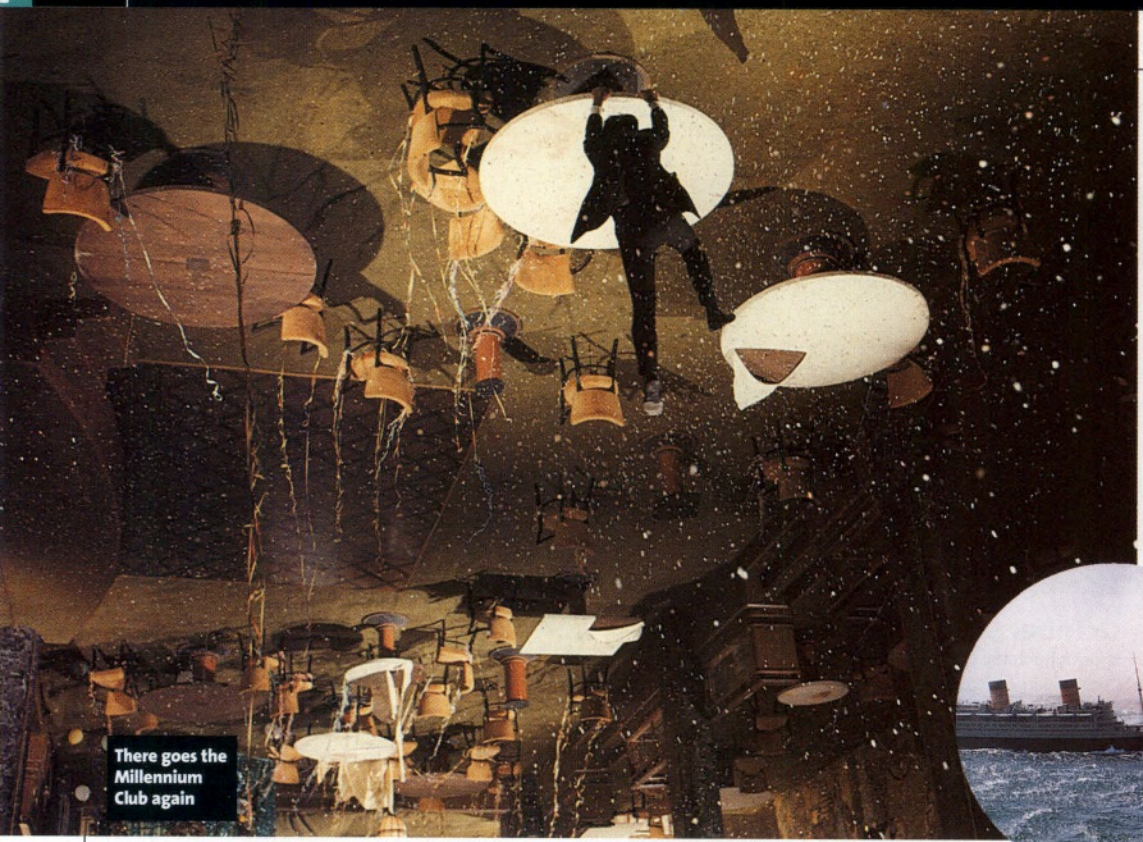
THE MATRIX

Keanu Reeves, Carrie-Anne Moss, Laurence Fishburne
Reeves fights the power in the Wachowski Brothers' eye-popping, mind-bending sci-fi action thriller. Lots of good, flashy fun, and not nearly as complicated as some people would have you believe. To rent on video and buy on DVD.
www.matrixmovie.com

VIRUS

Jamie Lee Curtis, William Baldwin, Donald Sutherland
Increasingly nasty sci-fi horror, shamelessly derivative and stupid to the core. Mankind is the virus, according to a malevolent alien entity who re-animates rotting corpses on board an abandoned Russian ship. To rent.
www.virusthemovie.com

WORDS: MARSHALL JULIUS; PICTURES: MOVIESTORE



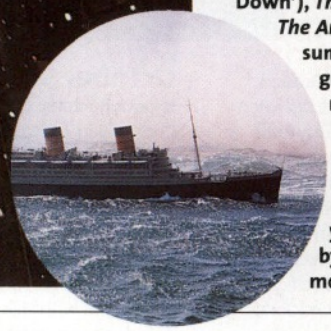
There goes the Millennium Club again

Disaster Online

members.tripod.com/~DisasterOnline/ ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

So why do we like to watch global destruction and human suffering in glorious Technicolor? 'Some people find it hard to understand what it is that lovers of disaster movies appreciate in a disaster film... we've been accused of loving to see the world obliterated to satisfy some inner-evil,' says the Webmaster of Disaster Online. *The Poseidon Adventure* ('It's Hell Upside Down'), *The China Syndrome*, *The Andromeda Strain* – summaries of the greatest disaster movies are here, alongside profiles of actors and producers. If you've been neglecting your inner-evil, drop by the best disaster movie site online.



'Looks like an iceberg...'

DISASTER MOVIES 'Is there anybody here who knows how to fly a plane?' No, but there are some people who certainly know how to construct a Web site

Alive

members.aol.com/PorkinsR6/alive.html ★★★★

Based on Piers Paul Read's remarkable real-life tale about a Uruguayan rugby team stranded in the Andes after their plane crashed, *Alive* opens with one of the most convincing and frightening plane crash sequences ever filmed... but what on earth is John Malkovich doing in the opening sequence, muttering inanely to us through a cloud of cigarette smoke? That's what happens when you eat your friends for supper. Jokes apart, this is an excellent and detailed text-based site about a compelling story of triumph over tragedy.

Apollo 13

www.bomis.com/rings/apollo13/ ★★★★

Home of the Apollo 13 Web-ring, you'll find a cornucopia of links to reviews, sound clips, pictures and background about this fantastic disaster-in-space film. Director Ron Howard just couldn't do any wrong with this movie – after all, you don't get much more compelling than real-life astronauts-cheat-death stories. It's a great disaster movie and probably the second best true space race story after *The Right Stuff*. Who cares that the acting is so wooden it looks as if Pinocchio was in charge of casting?

'Vanessa Feltz must be getting up...'

Deep Impact

www.deepimpact.com ★★★★

Did you know that there's far more chance of the earth being destroyed by an asteroid than of you winning the lottery? It's happened before – and it will happen again. This is another story that captures the zeitgeist, riding the wave of millennial prophecies of doom, and released last year around the same time *Newsweek* splashed on the discovery of a large earth-approaching object. It just pipped *Armageddon* as the asteroid movie of 1998 – largely because we're not expected to believe a bunch of delinquent oil rig workers are the planet's only hope. Then again, it lacks the cornball brilliance of the 1979 pre-CGI film *Meteor*. Pay a visit to the now standard-format official movie site, which tells you exactly how the world is going to end.

Deep Impact: that's blown it

Disaster Movies

www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Bungalow/7997/ ★★★

Little brother to Disaster Online, this site isn't as comprehensive, but its creator puts himself on the line by focusing on the four 'great disaster movies of all time' – *Earthquake*, *Towering Inferno*, *The Poseidon Adventure* and the *Airport* series – and he's not far wrong in his selection. Click on the links to read reviews and plot outlines. Then email the Webmaster to tell him that the greatest disaster movie ever is, of course, *The Medusa Touch* with Richard Burton hamming it up as the man 'with the power to create catastrophe'.

Irwin Allen News Network

www.iann.net/ ★★★

Hi, my name's Irwin Allen. You might remember me from such classic films as *Flood!*, *Earth's Final Fury* and *The Amazing Captain Nemo*. No, I don't think we do. But we DO remember you for producing and directing BOTH *The Towering Inferno* and *The Poseidon Adventure*! Godammit, the man's a genius and here's his Web site. It's dedicated to *Lost in Space*, *Land of the Giants*, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* and other, er, classic TV series. You can even sign up to receive news from Irwin Allen land.

The Day The World Should Have Come To An End

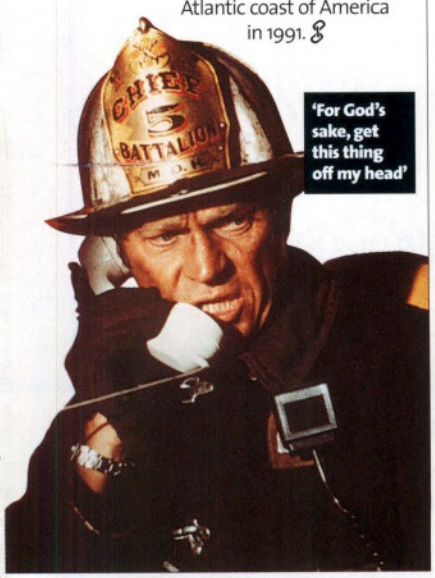
www.phi.lu/2xdudwes.html ★★★

Disaster movies or disastrous movies? Ask the makers of this site. They've put their money where their mouth is and made their very own spoof disaster movie: *Den Daag Un Deem d'welt Ennergoe Sollt* – well, it sounds rather more menacing in Luxembourgisch. The story reveals a fairly feeble attempt to send-up the genre that is surely un-sendupable – Philistines.

The Perfect Storm

upcomingmovies.com/perfect storm.html ★★★

Directed by Wolfgang Petersen of *Das Boot* fame and set for release in June 2000, this is the film of the best-selling book by 'writer and adventurer' Sebastian Junger. Will it be as good as the book? With George Clooney starring we are entitled to have our doubts, but the story is perfect material for a meteorological disaster movie. This site gives you the low-down on the production schedule and links to background about the savage 'Northeaster' that hit the North Atlantic coast of America in 1991.



The Towering Inferno Archive

home.worldonline.nl/~ajvdlely/ ★★★★

'One Tiny Spark Becomes A Night of Blazing Suspense. The World tallest Building is on Fire. You are on 135th Floor... No Way Down... No Way Out.' If you were to make a list of the top ten pub conversation pieces, *The Towering Inferno* is right up there in between *The Flumps* and football. This is the disaster movie par excellence, and everything you ever wanted to know about it can be found at the wonderful Archive, created to celebrate its 25th anniversary.

Titanic

www.titanicmovie.com ★★★★

The official site of a film in which a big ship smacks into an iceberg and sinks while the band just keeps on playing – in case you didn't know. This re-telling of the world's most famous man-made disaster is just about in the running for disaster movie status owing to the special effects, but since when did you need a box of Kleenex to watch a disaster movie? Let's face it, when it comes down to it, this is a big girl's blouse of a film. The site, however, is pretty darn impressive and deserves a look.

REAL-LIFE CALAMITIES

When Nature Attacks

Disaster movies not real enough for you? Never fear, from man-made calamities such as the Chernobyl meltdown and the Hindenburg disaster, to the world's greatest natural catastrophes such as the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906, the Internet is teeming with information for all you sick disaster junkies. Stop by at *members.tripod. com/~dogw/index.htm* to get started on a tour of planetary mayhem. For even more tawdry details and the latest disaster news there's the Disaster Centre *www.disastercenter.com*, or you could try the Illinois Disaster Resources page (*www.ag.uiuc.edu/~disaster/disaster.html*) where you'll find important information on how to survive any disasters that might some day befall you.

best movies sites ★★★★★

where can I...

GET LATEST NEWS AND RELEASE DATES?

www.popcorn.co.uk
British perspective on new releases.
www.corona.bc.ca/films/filmlistings.html
A complicated site which gives the inside track on forthcoming films.
filmunlimited.co.uk
The Guardian's latest big-screen behemoth comes alive.
uk.imdb.com
The bible of online film.

DECIDE WHAT TO SEE?

www.salon.com/ent/movies
The most cerebral, well-written reviews on the Web.
www.filmreview.co.uk
At last, Britain can boast a reviews site to rival the Americans.
aint-it-cool-news.com
Reviews and exclusive news.
www.mrcranky.com
The amusing protagonist casts his critical eye over all of the latest movie releases.

FIND OFFICIAL FILM SITES?

www.filmfour.com
Details of the TV channel, and the latest films C4 have in production.
www.foxmovies.com
Links to all 20th Century Fox releases.
www.movies.warnerbros.com
Umbrella site featuring both WB's new films and some long- (and sometimes best-) forgotten classics.
www.atomfilms.com
Animations, short film previews and latest film news.

SEARCH FOR OBSCURE FILMS AND SCRIPTS?

www.script-o-rama.com
Read rejected scripts for well-known films and transcripts of obscure ones.
www.ohthehumanity.com
The worst movies of all time, lovingly detailed.
www.badmovies.org
The best B (for bad, presumably) movies of all time.
www.losman.com/fod.htm
A site dedicated to gruesome death in films. Which is nice.

BUY OR RENT VIDEOTAPES?

www.reel.com
DVDs and videos on the cheap.
www.blackstar.co.uk
Regular discounts, DVDs and charts.
www.filmsite.org/greatlists.html
Decide which videos to rent with this mother of all film lists.
www.blockbuster.co.uk
The site of the shop: no more, no less.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.arts.movies.past-films
Discuss all-time classic movies.

Click before the flicks: US-style reviews and comment at www.filmreview.co.uk

FIND A CINEMA?

www.ticketlinks.co.uk
Excellent portal for film screenings.
www.virgin.net/cinema/index.html
Simply enter a title and/or postcode to get locations and pithy reviews.
www.odeon.co.uk
Book online, or peruse the latest releases. A stylish and useful site.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Send an email with 'subscribe' in the body to ***majordomo@lists.xmission.com*** for movie news and chat.

GET CHATTING?

wwwo.delphi.com/blairwitch/
Discuss what they're calling 'the scariest movie of all time'.

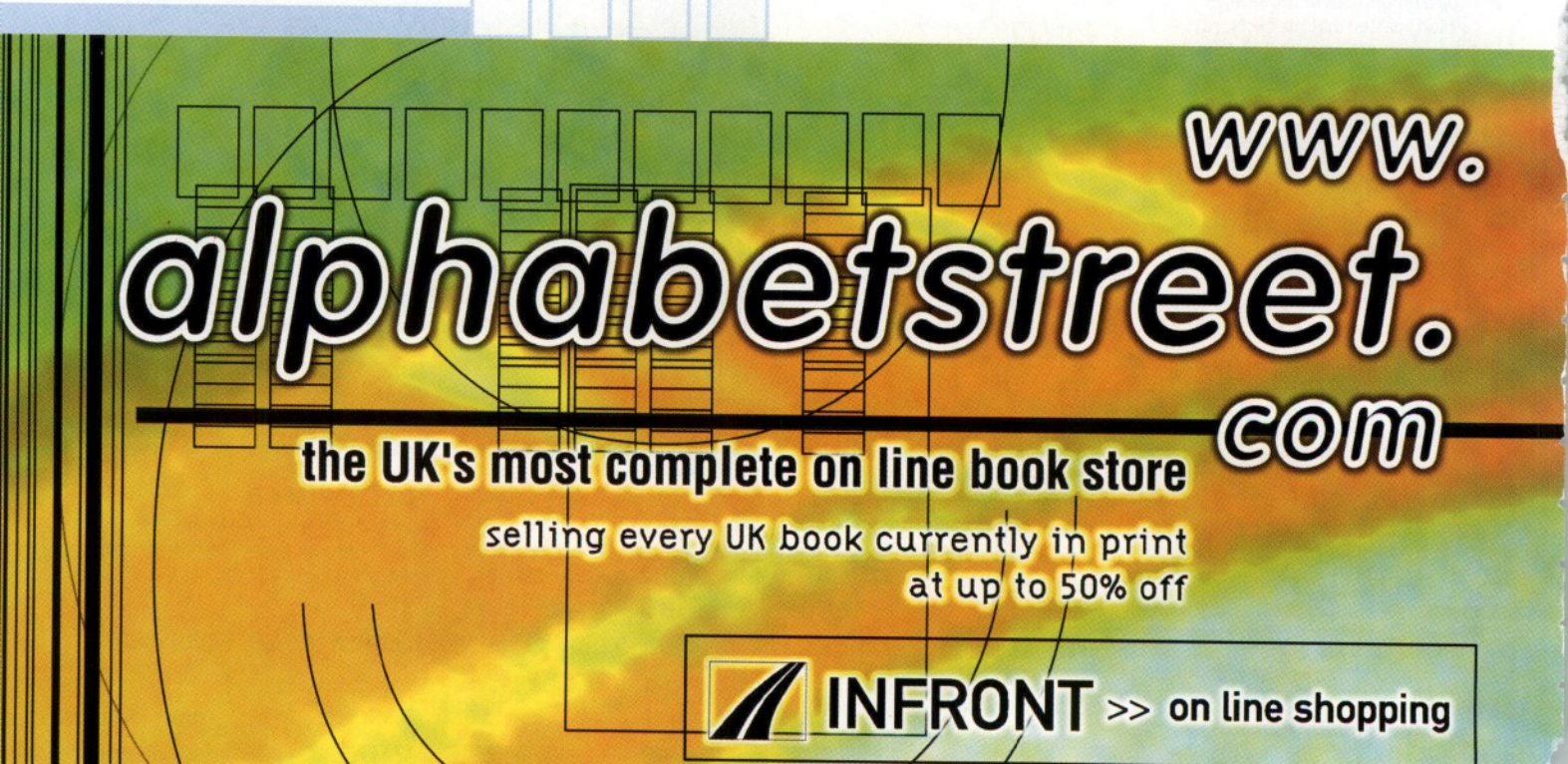
WORDS: CHRISTOPHER HADLEY; PICTURES: KOBAL

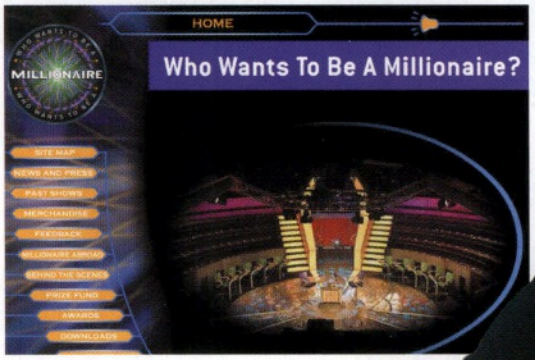
DIARY **Midnight 31 December – computers self-destruct, planes fall from the sky, nuclear missiles launch, world ends**
www.bug2000.co.uk

www.
dvdstreet.
com

the UK's greatest on line DVD store

selling every region 2 DVD at up to 50% off
free delivery in the UK





Tarrant: would anyone like him if he didn't give money away?

Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?

www.phone-a-friend.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Remind yourself just how many £64,000 questions you got right in series three – without losing any lives (or friends) on the way – and revel in the 'I could have done better game' that we all love to play. All the winners and answers are profiled and recorded here for Chris Tarrant's butt-clenchingly tense TV quiz, which appears to be taking over the world. There are also screensavers and wallpaper to download, although you'd have to be sad or a member of the Royle Family (same thing really), to do so.

best TV sites ★★★★★ where can I...

FIND PROGRAMME GUIDES FOR POPULAR SHOWS?

www.snpp.com/episodeguide.html
Every *Simpsons* episode ever made, with great downloads.
dialspace.dial.pipex.com/town/plaza/ecg1
Brilliant *Coronation Street* episode guides. Very up-to-date.

FIND TV LISTINGS?

www.toaster.co.uk
Well presented electronic programme guide.
www.digiguide.co.uk
Customised guide to British telly: schedules and reviews.

LOOK UP MY FAVOURITE TV PERSONALITY?

www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/8198/actress.htm
Got a favourite TV actress? Go to the TV Actress Directory.
www.pathfinder.com/people/web/index.html
People Magazine's speciality is B-list celebs: find one here; plus all the gossip you'll ever need.

Is that your final answer?

GAME SHOWS Even if you can't get onto TV yourself, you can answer the $64,000 question online

This is Jeopardy!

www.spe.sony.com/tv/shows/jeopardy/ ★★★

Chris Tarrant might think he's God of the TV quiz show (or is that just 'God'), but he can't even hold a candle to *Jeopardy* host Alex Trebek. *Jeopardy*, the show in which contestants have to supply questions to cryptic answers, has held the US number one spot for 14 years. Nose around the studio, meet 'famous' (or not) contestants and check out the host's expanding hairstyles.

A question of taste...

A Question of Sport

www.bbc.co.uk/sport/questionofsport ★★★★

So who was the most irritating captain of *Question of Sport*? Emlyn Hughes, Willie Carson...? Remind yourself here. Bypass the potted history of the show (check out those eye-boggling 70s graphics) and instead head straight for the online games. The classic Pictureboard and Mystery Guest are an amusing way to squander 10 minutes, even if the latter is a selection of pics rather than a video. Home or away, sir?

University Challenge

www.damtp.cam.ac.uk/user/smb1001/uc/ucshow.html ★★★

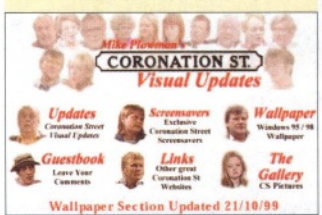
What do those bright sparks who win *University Challenge* do afterwards? Well, former winning Trinity student Sean Blanchflower is, surprise surprise, still a student at Trinity, but he's found time to put up a site dedicated to the show. Reminisce about bespectacled Bamber and keep abreast of results, which are bang up-to-date. There are also links to a host of news articles and contestants' sites. Unfortunately there's no mention of the classic *Young Ones* episode – some people are too obviously too precious.

Never Mind the Buzzcocks

www.talkback.co.uk/buzzcocks/index.htm ★★

Take *They Think It's All Over*, swap sport for music and Nick Hancock for Mark Lamarr (hired along with Sean Hughes and Phill Jupitus through a small ad in the *NME*) and, bingo, you've got *Never Mind the Buzzcocks*. Both programmes can be found at the Talkback Web site and, although it looks good and has the odd amusing anecdote, this doesn't really compensate for a lack of material. Pretty but vacant.

Buzzcocks: which one's Pete Shelley?



The word on the Street – daily updates

FIND TV NEWS AND INFO?

tv.cream.org
One of the best sites for long-dead shows and snack foods.
www.ultimatetv.com
American-influenced site with links to current shows, gossip and info. Great 'Ask Mr TV' facility.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.tv.game-shows
Yes, there are groups devoted to following quiz shows...

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Want to find out about writing TV shows? Mail ***majordomo@spies.com*** with 'info episodic-1' in your message.

GET CHATTING?

clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/eastenders
You need never leave Albert Square with this chat room.

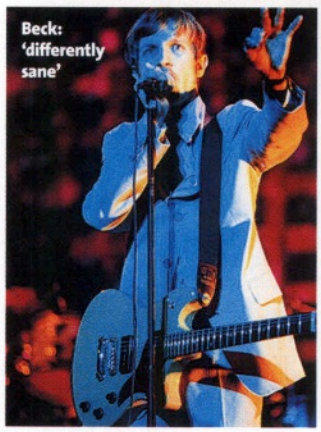
Looking for more television sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

WORDS: GARY PARKINSON; PICTURES: BBC

'Tis the season to buy CDs

NEW RELEASES Some new sounds you might like to find in your Christmas stocking

'Now imagine you're a big scary monster'


Beck: 'differently sane'

Beck

Midnite Vultures **GEFFEN** ★★★★

The none-more-influential LA waif gets round to releasing an 'official' follow-up to multi-million seller *Odelay* and, in the process, proves he's one of the big boys. From the funked-up *Sexx Laws* onwards he gets down and dirty with Funkadelic riffs and Prince-style licking of the listener's ear, and comes up with one sexy MF of a record.

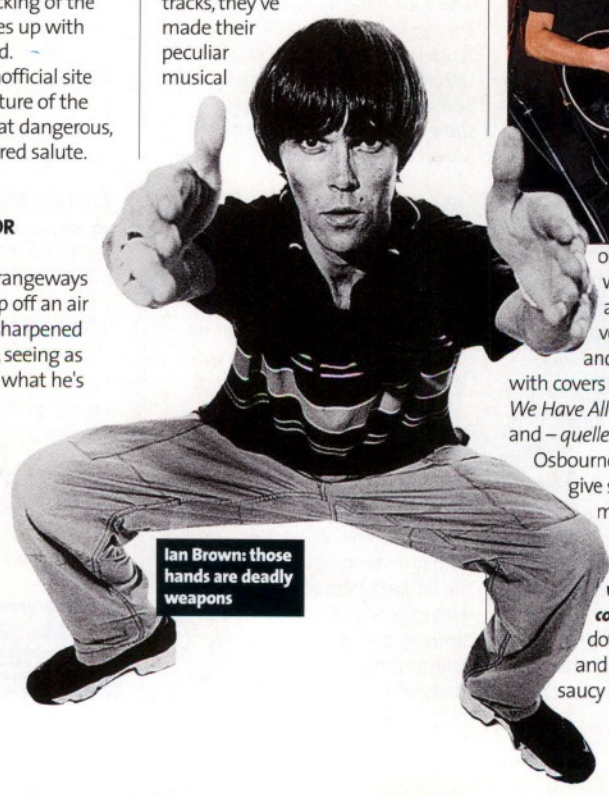
www.beck.com Arty, unofficial site with FAQ and intro picture of the man himself giving that dangerous, rock and roll one-fingered salute.

Ian Brown

Golden Greats **POLYDOR** ★★★★

It seems his spell in Strangeways for threatening to chop off an air hostess's hands have sharpened Browny's musical wits, seeing as *Golden Greats* delivers what he's been promising since splitting up the Stone Roses. Stronger and utterly funky, this second solo album reveals itself as the work of a man many steps up the evolutionary ladder.

www.ianbrown.com A scarily large picture of Browny's nostrils introduces such gems as album clips, lyrics and – wait for it – a postcard of the jailbird himself.

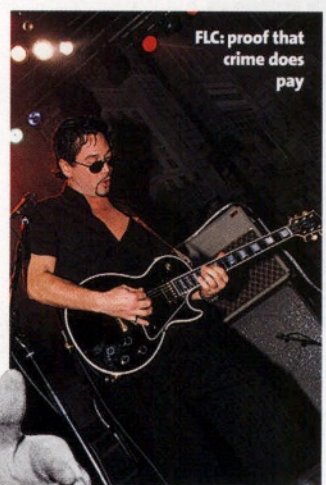

Ian Brown: those hands are deadly weapons

Fun Lovin' Criminals

Mimosa **CHRYSALIS** ★★★

FLC have always had a lounge element to their music and, with this collection of B-sides and bonus tracks, they've made their peculiar musical obsession public. Here we have slowed down and schmoozed-up versions of *Scooby Snacks* and *Bombin' The L* along with covers of Louis Armstrong's *We Have All The Time In The World* and – *quelle* bizarre – Ozzy Osbourne's *Crazy Train*. Should give singer and constant man-about-town Huey even more luck with the ladies.

www.funlovincriminals.com Plenty of MP3 downloads, chat room and more than enough saucy Huey pics.


FLC: proof that crime does pay

ALBUM OF THE MONTH

Beastie Boys

The Sounds Of Science **GRAND ROYAL** ★★★★★

Lately, the Beasties have been known for just about everything apart from their music. The record label, the magazine, the Tibetan Freedom cause... all worthy pursuits, but it's still their funk-riddled brat-rap that gets the juices flowing. And with this collection spanning their 15-year career, there's plenty to remind you how great they are. Altogether now: You gotta fight, for your right...to PAAAARTY!

www.grandroyal.com All-purpose Beastie label site with gig webcasts, handy advice column and opportunities to join the Grand Royal empire.

Gatecrasher

Disco-Tech **INCREDIBLE** ★★★★

Disco-Tech (oh, the clever word play) is the fourth in a seemingly endless series of compilations from the Sheffield superclub and its rise to trance heaven. With gems such as the magnificently-named Balearic Bill with *Destination Sunshine*, stick that dummy in the mouth, don the Mitsubishi cape and bow down to the Lords of Trance.

www.gatecrasher.co.uk Buy Gatecrasher tickets and enter Millennium Eve competitions.

Korn

Issues **EPIC** ★★

The Grand Wizards of the US Doom Rock Cabal – think Metallica played extra-slow with songs revolving around uplifting themes such as paranoia and death – return. With singer, former mortician Jonathan Davis exhibiting a nifty talent for the bagpipes, it's enough to make your dog weep.

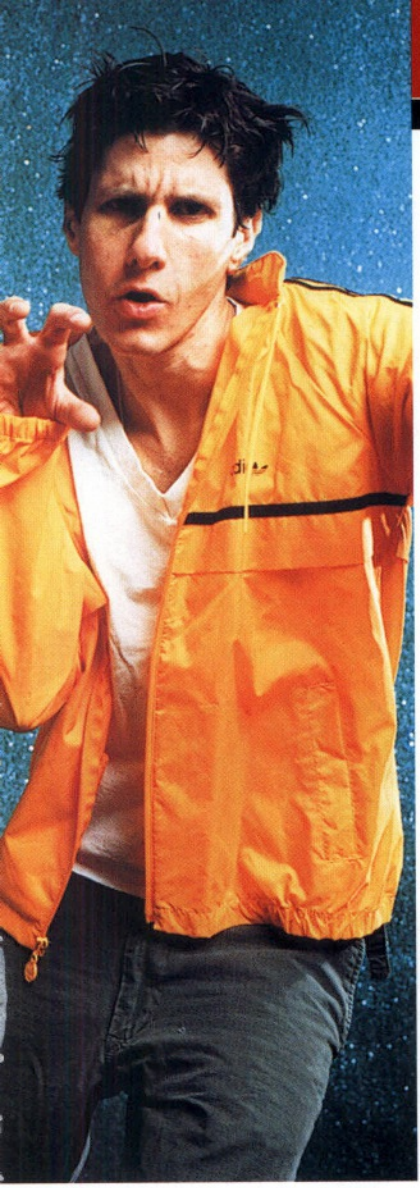
www.korn.com Usual guff but with Korn everything has to begin with K. Thus there's a Kornography, a few Kornpetitions and Kornclips. Krazy.

Lightning Seeds

Tilt **EPIC** ★★★

Thanks to the Renault Scenic ads played roughly once a minute and constant *Never Mind The Buzzcocks*

WORDS: JOHN MULLEN; PICTURES: RETNA, MICHAEL ANGELO CHESTER



appearances, it feels like Ian Broudie's never been away – though doubtless there are some who wish otherwise. *Tilt* features Broudie's trademark melody tagged onto the usual optimistic themes which should keep office parties going well into the millennium. ***www.lightning-seeds.co.uk*** The

Korn: a-maizeing stuff from the US

cutely-titled Sugar Coated Website has all the usual plus 'Rarity Of The Month' (currently a German 'Splattered Blue 12" of Joy', in case you were wondering).

Marilyn Manson

The Last Tour On Earth

POLYDOR ★★★

What would Christmas be without the self-styled 'God of F**k' releasing a live album to cuddle up to the log fire with? In between fighting off America's moral majority and writing his own biopic, Mr Manson has somehow found the time to make this live album, with all deliciously offensive bases covered. From early tracks like *Get Your Gunn* right up to the recent *Antichrist Superstar* it's a demanding ride. The Xmas Number One spot may, however, be stretching things a bit. ***www.marilyn-manson.com*** Exhaustive fan site with cheery discussions entitled *Death Vs Me*.

CLASSIC ALBUM

Public Enemy

It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back

DEF JAM *(1988)*

In these Puff Daddy-sponsored hip hop times, it's difficult to remember when rap was filled with righteous anger and searing political statement. One listen to PE's (and hip hop's) finest vinyl hour should sort that out. Tracks like *Bring The Noise* haven't been bettered since and in Chuck D – now a US news broadcaster – they had a mainman more potent than any elected political figure. Listen and quake. ***www.public-enemy.com*** Keen fan of the Internet Chuck D offers a tour diary and opportunities to buy PE's latest album exclusively online.

Sonic Youth

SYR 4: Goodbye 20th Century

SMELLS LIKE RECORDS ★★

Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat, so get ready to make merry with Sonic Youth's 'sonic interpretation of contemporary pieces of spatial sound'. Tackling the works of modern composers such as John Cage and Takehisa Kosugi, the Youth's usual atonal noise was cranked up to unlistenable level. One for the plain unhinged only. ***www.angelfire.com/sd/psykogert/index.html*** Play the chords Bert Weedon hears in his nightmares.

Various

The Best of Bond... James Bond

EMI ★★★

Marilyn: let herself go

With the new Bond film on its way, it's a fine time to visit the ghosts of Bond films past. So shake that Martini, don the tux and raise an eyebrow to past theme tunes with McCartney's *Live And Let Die* – the best of all – among others. ***www.007forever.com.*** A site possibly constructed by a psychotic obsessive given the amount of Bond-related material on offer.

Gig and tour guide

DECEMBER The nation's finest head out to earn some Christmas money

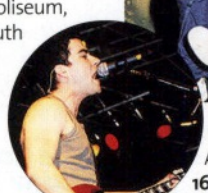
BLUR

Damon and his plane-flying chums embark on a glorious trawl through their singles back catalogue. **9 December** Birmingham NEC, **10 December** Brighton Centre, **11 December** Wembley Arena ***blur.org.uk***

FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS

Easy going lounge-rap with singer Huey becoming more and more like Barry White every day. **9 December** Bridlington Spa, **11 December** St Austell Coliseum, **13 December** Bournemouth International Centre, **14 December** Reading Rivermead, **15 December** Brighton Centre, **16 December** Aston Villa Leisure Centre ***www.funlovincriminals.com***

Damon: ready for lift-off



Stereophonics: Welsh dragons

JAMES

Enduring Mancs get spiritual along with 10,000 others every night. **8 December** Newcastle Telewest Arena, **9 December** Glasgow SECC, **11 December** Manchester Evening News Arena, **12 December** London Wembley Arena ***www.jamestheband.com***

PET SHOP BOYS

Expect bizarre costumes with a high dose of disco-pop irony. **9 December** Sheffield Arena, **10 December** Manchester Evening News Arena, **12 December** Dublin Point, **13 December** Birmingham NEC, **14 December** Cardiff International Arena, **16 December** BIC, Bournemouth, **17 December** Brighton Centre, **19 December** Plymouth Pavilions, **20 December** London Wembley Arena ***www.parlophone.co.uk/psb***

PSB: proof that fame doesn't guarantee sartorial elegance

STEREOPHONICS

The band gear up for arena-sized Xmas fun. **9 December** Manchester Evening News Arena, **11&12 December** Birmingham NEC, **13&14 December** London Wembley Arena, **16&17 December** Cardiff International Arena, **18 December** Sheffield Arena, **31 December** Liverpool Pier Head ***www.stereophonics.co.uk***

TRAVIS

Britain's favourite high emotion strummers rock on throughout the UK. **12 December** Belfast Waterfront, **13 December** Dublin Olympia Theatre, **6 December** Wolverhampton Civic Hall, **17 December** Brixton Academy, **20&21 December** Edinburgh Corn Exchange, **23&24 December** Glasgow Barrowlands ***www.travisonline.com***

Thank heaven for long tassles

Spot the difference

TRIBUTE BANDS Is imitation the most sincere form of flattery? Or a cheap, unimaginative rip-off? Check out these sites and see

WORDS: PAUL WINSLOW; PICTURES: RETNA, REDFERNS

Bjorn Again

www.bjornagain.com ★★★

Although they've played at the Royal Albert Hall, Bjorn Again can't be accused of taking themselves seriously – they 'surfaced in 1989 after their helicopter and a glittery platform shoe collided leaving them stranded on a deserted island'. Added to this, they have names like Bjorn Volvo-Us and Frida Longstokin. Dead glam.

The Billy Fury Experience

www.paradisepromotions.co.uk ★★★

No tribute band could have a more apt set than this one, with songs like *It's Only Make Believe* and *Like I've Never Been Gone*. Strange fact number two: the singer's band is apparently the same one that supported Fury himself. Spooky.

The Complete Stone Roses

odell.connect-2.co.uk/ TCSR.html ★★

When the lead singer sings *I Am The Resurrection*, it's very close to the truth – Roses ex-bassist Mani was even moved to say that 'they sounded better than we did before we split.' A generation grew up thinking that the Stone Roses are to music what ice and lemon is to G&T: worship here.

D.Ran D.Ran

www.guy123.forceg.co.uk/dran.htm ★★★★

Despite the fact that D. Ran D. Ran are 'the most notorious band on the planet earth', their site says they are 'currently seeking new and exciting venues around the UK.' Go on, someone 'em a village hall for the night. The band has a new CD with four covered hits which you can also download from this site – and you can use the message board to blag a lift to gigs. Handy.

Van Halen Tribute Band

www.5150.on.ca ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Lovers of guitar-based rock and absurd hairstyles will be head-banging against their PC as they're regaled by the video and audio clips of Van Halen's finest offerings. You can *Jump* and ask *Why Can't This Be Love* to your heart's content. One fan claims the band do the Halen better than Halen themselves. Utter codswallop.

Van the men: more Bedford than Halen

TOWER europe

www.towerrecords.co.uk

Tower Records have recently redesigned their web site with impressive results. Offering over 800,000 titles covering music, video and books it is one of the largest entertainment retail sites on the Web. ★★★★★

More music

Music

TOWER europe

Music

Home Advanc

Fop 'til you drop with Si and co (above) and the also-D Rans (right)

an album – *Appetite For Destruction* by Guns 'n Roses. The band are here to 'keep alive the spirit of '87', and are happy if they piss you off, because it means they are doing an 'even better job' of replicating their heroes. Nice attitude, lads.

The Official Bootleg Beatles Homepage

www.bootlegbeatles.com ★★★

Few bands can say they've never written their own music or released a single, yet have made it on stage with Oasis. So the Bootlegs must be good, which this site testifies – there are details of the forthcoming anniversary tour (they've been going 20 years), as well as a heap of mop-top pics and merchandise.

Police Fource

www.Fource.freeserve.co.uk ★★★

Ahhh, a police tribute band – presumably they mimic sirens and perform such classics as *Do You Know How Fast You Were Going* and the timeless *Had Too Much To Drink Have We Sir?* The site is pretty tongue-in-cheek: see the dodgy barnets, and the lead singer's mimicry is described as 'second only to Joe Longthorne'.

Rocket Queens

www.rocketqueens.com ★★★

Well, at least Brian May's made an effort

A tribute act dedicated to

The Royal Family

www.theroyalfamily.freeserve.co.uk ★★★★

Queen said *Let Me Entertain You* before Robbie was a twinkle in Take That's eye. Though the band are no more, the bohemian vibe lives on: not least with this group, apparently the 'UK's favourite tribute band'. They're colourful and loud: something to bear in mind if you enter the competition to design the year 2000 tour poster.

Which One's Pink?

www.whichonespink.com ★★★★

All in all it's just another brick in the tribute band wall. There's no half measures liking Pink Floyd, which means that if you're a real fan you probably would fly over to America to watch a tribute band. It takes all sorts, we suppose. The site looks impressive and the band must be pretty good: they're even being supported on their tour – although it is by unknowns Choking Ghost and Czar.

THE MOST AUTHENTIC FAKES

Just like the real thing

Bootleg Beatles: fab

So who's the best tribute band there is, then? Is there anyone who out-Gallaghers Oasis or out-Bonos U2? Well pop along to Tribute Band Mania! at *home.earthlink.net/~blackhol/* and the answer awaits you. Van Halen, The Beatles and Pink Floyd cover bands take the top spots.

best music sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND OUT ABOUT MP3s?

www.mp3.com
Get started on the official site, with heaps of legal downloads.
mp3.lycos.com
Browse the world of MP3s using a comprehensive search engine.
www.zlook4.com
Easy-to-use search engine.
www.cddb.com
Produces a chart of the top online songs by tracking downloads.

FIND A BAND SITE?

www.ubl.com
Make this the first stop on your quest – for its huge search engine.
www.bigmouth.co.uk
UK-specific site with tons of links.
www.musicsearch.com
Find sites for artists or music-related services. Efficient and quick.
www.music999.com
Portal for all good British music, featuring an artist guide.

VIEW THE LATEST NEWS AND REVIEWS?

www.rollingstone.com
The well-written US publication.
www.music365.co.uk
Sensible, enjoyable music features.
www.clickmusic.co.uk
New portal for rock and pop with plenty of news and links.
www.dotmusic.com
British site for all rock and pop news and links.

BUY NEW CDS?

www.audiostreet.com
Cheap, easy-to-navigate CD store with a large back catalogue.
www.boxman.co.uk
Competitive, and very easy on the eye.
www.hmv.co.uk
The site of the high street chain store, naturally.
www.yalplay.com
Popular CD and video store.

BUY TICKETS FOR GIGS?

www.ticketmaster.co.uk
Tickets for any live gig online.
www.aloud.com
Offers a nationwide gig guide.
www.lastminute.com
Excellent bargains on late tickets.
www.ticketzone.co.uk
The biggest events offered online.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.music.lyrics
Sort out those missing words.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Join the Bandland list for musicians from ***www.angelfire.com/pe/tippycup/BANDLAND.html***

GET CHATTING?

Select a group from ***www2.imusic.com***

Looking for more Music sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

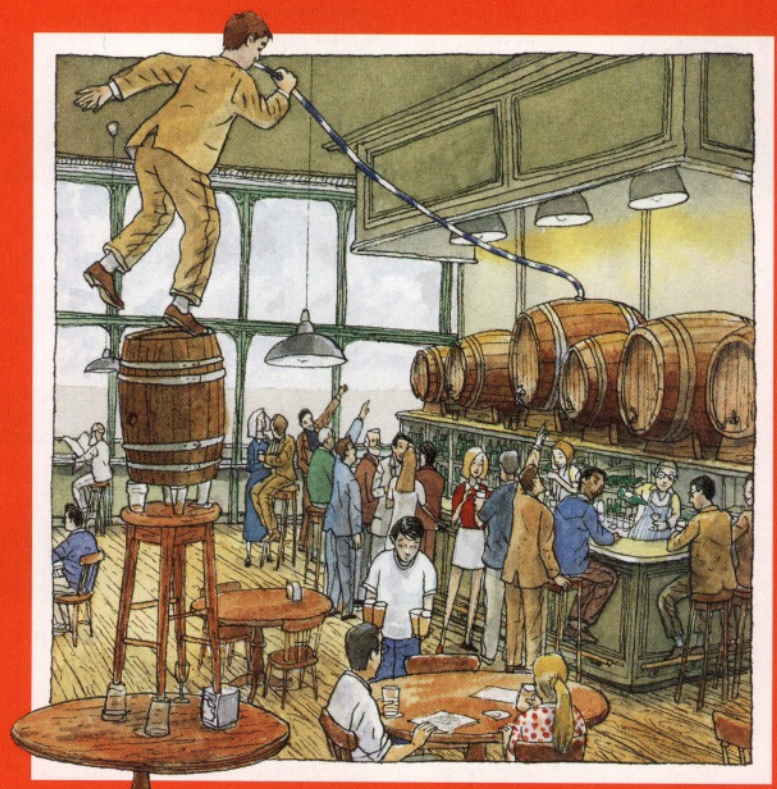
More video More books...

Video/DVD | Classical | Books

Over 800,000 titles

Search | Browse | Departments

ted Search | Customer Service | Your Account | Your Basket | Site Map



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What mother wouldn't be proud?

'Ain't getting me on no Web site, fool'

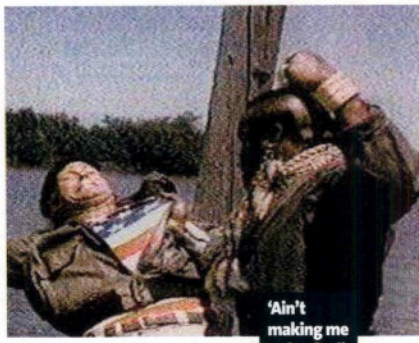
MR T The man with more gold than Fort Knox has graduated from the A-Team to Net superstar...just check out this little lot

Mr T vs Everything

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

www.sit.wisc.edu/~kljense3/MrT.html ★★★★

The whole Mr T cult revolves around Web sites where storyboards show our well 'ard hero beating the crap out of someone – from Darth Maul to David Hasselhoff. There are links to 156 such pages here as well as sounds and downloads to spice up your computer. And with a Mr T theme on your desktop, you need never worry about security again. What are you waitin' for sucka?


'Ain't making me swim, fool'

getting beaten up by bad bloke; good bloke calls in A-Team; A-Team get locked in garage but build a tank out of loo rolls and beat the bad guys outta town, despite firing a thousand bullets that don't hit anyone... In case you missed some of the subtle nuances first time, they're all here.

Mr T Resource Archive

sucka.webjump.com ★★★

After witnessing Mr T beat the living daylights out of a host of characters on the Web, you may decide to create your own page and get him to sort out the celebrity that really gets your goat (how about Mr T versus Ian Beal?). If so, this is the place to visit, with a mass of pictures and the Jibba Jabba sound archive to pilfer, which has the immortal lines: 'I ain't dressin' up like no nun!' and 'Murdock, is this your chicken?'.

Mr T's Shopping Extravaganza!

www.uidaho.edu/~kowag693/MrT/shop.htm ★★

And you thought the Teletubbies had the merchandising market sewn up? They ain't got nothing on Mr T. Where else could your find a car alarm, which 'proceeds to pummel and throw would-be thieves who try to steal your car, or touch his gold?'. And be sure to add the Mr T *And Say!* game to your Christmas present list. Test it out here by spinning the wheel and listen to what Mr T has to say. Shame it's not real merchandise that you can buy.

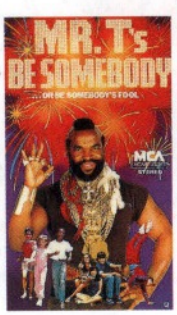
'Shut up, fool'

'Ain't getting me in no limo, fool'

Mr T Be Somebody... Or Be Somebody's Fool Tribute

www.geocities.com/~mtbsobsf/ ★★

As well as 90-odd appearances in a dodgy 80s adventure series and getting seven bells knocked out of him as Clubber Lang (great name) in *Rocky*, Mr T also made it on to the screen for a video called *Be somebody...or be somebody's fool*. If you were unfortunate enough to miss out on this experience, catch up on everything here, including sound clips.



The Mr T Fan Club

www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Alley/6026/MrT.html

Laurence Tureaud, for that is our hero's real name, has quite a following. But while many still sign up here, you get the feeling the Webmaster can't really be bothered to partake in it all these days: 'I have a job and a baby on the way and I'm in military training. Frankly, this page isn't important to me right now.' Please yourself.

Mr T's K-Rad HomePage, Fool

www3.lopht.com/~veggie/MrT.html ★★★

How difficult can it be to create an *A-Team* episode guide? Good bloke

Mr T Throughout American History

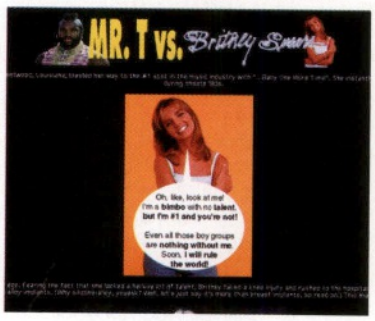
www.uidaho.edu/~kowag693/history/history.htm ★★

You probably thought Mr T was purely an 80s phenomenon, so it may come as a shock to see he was present at the crucial moments of American history. He was the first man on the moon; he was there when Kennedy was shot and he fought in several wars. What a guy.

Mr T vs Austin Powers

www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Hills/6346/MrT/t_vs_ap/Page1.html ★★★

'It's 80s cool versus 60s fool,' as Mr T takes on the shag-tastic superspy. There are cameo roles from the other members of the A-Team and Doctor Evil pops up as our heroic medallion man attempts to stop Austin making American kids say rude words (because butter simply wouldn't melt in their little mouths, would it?).



Mr T vs the Blair Witch

www.angelfire.com/md2/mrt/index.html ★★★

So, you've seen the film that cost two bob to make and it scared you so much that the thought of passing a tree is enough to have you running for the nearest public toilet. Thankfully, Mr T is here, and will surely make light work of that cursed witch, who in this story has the temerity to steal his gold. Bad move, sucka.

Mr T vs Britney Spears

www.angelfire.com/ca3/tfiles/britney.html ★★★

In his A-Team role as BA Baracus, he was used to making the world a better place. Doing away with America's answer to Billie is another great humane act to add to his list of honours. But who would have thought that he'd need a hand from Debbie Gibson?

best celebrity sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND GOOD GOSSIP?

www.mrshowbiz.com
The fastest track to celebrity gossip, with the occasional exclusive, too.
www.goldi.com
A weekly update of the best (and the worst) celebrity gossip around.
www.edrive.com
Lots of gossip here, too, with reviews, features and extensive links.
www.celebritypalace.com
Plenty of gossip, plus links and resources.

READ MAGAZINES?

www.eonline.com
Get in touch with the worlds of music, TV, film and video.
www.tvguide.com
A vast American TV magazine with readable articles.
www.people.com
The popular US *People* magazine. Not exactly upmarket, but good fun.
www.AutographCollector.com
That's right – an entire magazine dedicated to collecting autographs.

FIND CELEBRITY HOME PAGES?

www.celebsites.com
Links to official sites of celebs from all walks of fame and fortune.
mw.simplenet.com/webring/index.html
Home of the fabled Celebrity Web Ring, a massive list of sites.
www.celebritysightings.com
Not what you might think – it's a big list of celebrity sites.
www.celebhoo.com
Useful new search engine for celebs, big and small.

FIND A STAR'S ADDRESS?

www.thezone.pair.com/email
Not just for celebrity emails; their addresses are available, too.
www.celebrityemail.com
Over 14,000 celebs on its pages, ranging from supermodels to princes.
www3.islandnet.com/~luree/howto.html
Tips and tricks for tracking down the celebrity of your choice.

See stats at seeing-stars

BUY CELEBRITY ITEMS?

www.women-celebrities.com/celebritymall/celebritymall.html
A load of celebrity merchandise, including posters, videos, books and calendars.
celebrityconnection.com/index.html
Buys and sells autographs, memorabilia, props and wardrobes.
www.autographworld.com
One of the biggest and most useable online autograph stores there is.
www.autographs-etc.com
Buy autographs, including those of John Travolta and Gillian Anderson.

An entertainment portal that's top of the charts? That'll be eonline.com, then

www.seeing-stars.com
An exhaustive resource for everything Hollywood-related, including tracking down your favourite stars.

MEET MY HERO?

www.yack.com
Updated list of compulsive celebrity events from across the Web.
chat.beeb.com
Stars from BBC shows drop in for a bit of a natter.
chat.yahoo.com
Weighty round-up of chat sessions.
www.aol.com/community/chat/allchats.html
Register with the Service Provider for access to their regular chats.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.tv.a-team
Keep the A-Team dream alive with fellow obsessives.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Send an email marked 'info' to ***efoley@tiac.net*** to discuss Celebrity Death Pools, and decide who might pop their proverbial clogs next.

GET CHATTING?

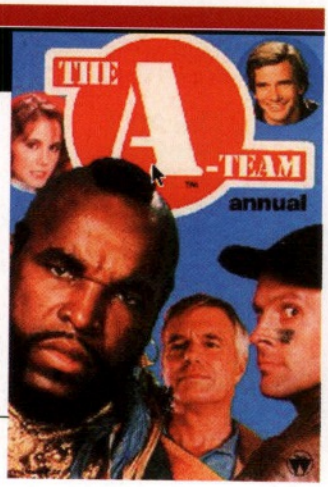
www.craigr.terminator.org.uk/ateam.html
Craig first saw the *A-Team* when he was eight and has 'never seen a show which matches its quality'. Why not pop in for a chat and argue the point with him?

WORDS: PAUL WINSLOW; PICTURES: REX, KOBAL

RETURN OF THE A-TEAM

A plan comes together

The A-Team was all very well when we were young kids because it entertained us even though we knew it was tosh. Now we're going to have it inflicted upon us again, because someone has decided to make a film of it. Keep an eye on *uk.imdb.com* for more information. And the cast? Well, we reckon replacing Mr T could be difficult, but how about Leicester City's Emile Heskey? And will they include the following? 'In 1972, a crack commando unit was sent to prison by a military court for a crime they didn't commit... If you have a problem, if no one else can help, and if you can find them, maybe you can hire the A-Team...' We can but hope.



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Hoops the daddy now?

A rocket under him might just do the trick

BASKETBALL You might need to be a giant to play it, but even the vertically-challenged can enjoy basketball on the Web

A Tribute To Wilt Chamberlain

members.tripod.com/~airjudden/wilt

★★★★

When Michael Jordan was too young to dunk biscuits, let alone basketballs, Wilt Chamberlain ruled the courts. From 1959 to 1972 this seven-footer dominated basketball and is the only player to score 100 points in a single game. Wilt died in October and this tribute site is packed with every conceivable fact and myth about a basketball legend.

Chamberlain: what a card he turned out to be

British Basketball League

www.bbl.org.uk ★★★

Thankfully, America doesn't hold the copyright on lanky athletic types, so we play basketball, too. The British version is gaining popularity because NBA fans want to see the sport live and standards are improving although, like this site, the British version isn't up to the US original...yet.

Harlem Globetrotters

www.harlemglobetrotters.com

★★★

Ever doubted their games were for real? It's one of the most frequently asked questions here. Answer: of course they were. These guys gave the modern game the dunk and the fast break offense, for pete's sake and, allegedly, never clowned around until they had a safe lead. Everything you wanted to know about the greatest team ever is here, including what Meadowlark Lemon is doing now.

Hooptown USA

www.hooptown.com

★★★★

'Twas a winter's night in Hooptown, Western Massachusetts in 1891, and the lads at the local YMCA International Training Centre were twiddling their thumbs, like they do. So James Naismith, a physical training instructor, had the idea of nailing two peach baskets at either end of the gym and basketball, as we know it, was born. Enjoy RealPlayer virtual tours and gory tales from the days when refs carried guns and wire cages around the courts.

Los Chucks OnHoops

www.onhoops.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Looking for slick graphics, video footage or pictures of the latest Shaq dunk? Well, there's none of that flashy, instant gratification stuff here. Instead you get well-written commentary and opinions and each day sees the addition of at least one missive addressing a hoops-related topic. Check out the Chump Register, a guide to bad players such as Yinka Dare – 'pity his name rhymes with stinker' or Scot Pollard – 'thinks he can play; he's the only one that does.' Hardly mature, but fun.

The Journal of Basketball Studies

www.tsoft.com/~deano ★★★★

Can you tell your Possession Scoring System from your Correlated

WORDS: SHAUN MARIN

DIARY **25 December Los Angeles Lakers v San Antonio Spurs. The re-energised Lakers take on the champion Spurs in**

best sport sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND THE LATEST NEWS AND SCORES?

espn.go.com
Fast scores from every sport, plus news with an American bias.
www.eurosport.com
As wide-ranging as the satellite channel. Obscure sports a speciality.
www.sky.co.uk/skysports
From the channel of the same name.
www.sporting-life.com
News, scores and betting advice from the paper of the same name.

FIND TOP FOOTBALL SITES?

www.football 365.co.uk
Daily paper with offbeat news and humour.
www.soccermet.com
Essential soccer site, with updated news.
www.teamtalk.com
Premium-rate phone lines on the Net.
ukfootballpages.com
Contains both official and fan links for every club.

FIND THE BEST SITES FOR POPULAR SPORTS?

www.cricinfo.com
The IMDb of cricket sites, with thousands of the choicest links.
www.scrum.com
The best rugby sites on the Net.
www.pga.com
Golf's governing body scores a hole-in-one with this informative site.
www.houseofboxing.com
RealVideo updates of fights.

FOLLOW EVENTS LIVE?

www.planetfootball.com
Hub site for English football clubs.
www.lsmsports.com/fight.htm
The biggest boxing bouts online.
www.broadcast.com/sports/soccer
From Derby County to the Jamaican national side in glorious RealAudio.
www.golfboxx.com
Tours in RealAudio, plus 'Golf Doctor'.

PLACE AN ONLINE BET?

www.sportsadviser.com
Latest odds and free advice.
www.williamhill.co.uk
British odds. Reliable and popular.
www.bluesq.com
Register for user-friendly betting.
www.inter-bet.com
One of the oldest Net bookies.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.sports.basketball
Join fellow hoop fans online.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Get NBA news in your inbox from
www.angelfire.com/tx/NBATODAY

GET CHATTING?

www.sportlive.net
Chat and sports from the *Express*.

Looking for more Sport sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

Gaussian Method? You thought basketball is just a sport? Wrong: it's a science all of its own. The JoBS site is ideal if you run a team, and interesting if you just love the sport. It covers all bases in an attempt to discover how to create the perfect basketball team.

Kobe Bryant Online

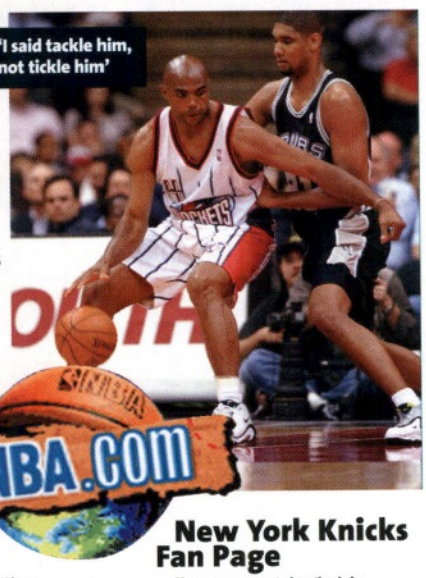
www.kobebryantonline.com
★★★

'From the time he skipped to High School in Hollywood,' writes Nelson George, here. 'Kobe has been a soloist and music has flowed from his game.' Fat lot of good all this does if you've a broken hand, though. The Lakers can hope that Kobe recovers from his recent injury and that this year is still the big one for the Michael Jordan Air Apparent.

Michael Jordan's Official Website

jordan.sportsline.com
★★★★★

Play like Mike, email Mike, vote for what you'd like to see Mike doing... We'll forgive the hero worship because, to many people, Michael Jordan *was* basketball, Now he's finally hung up his Nikes, the NBA isn't the same and nor are the Chicago Bulls. The team spent last season looking up from the bottom of the table, rather than down on the competition from the lofty heights of His Airness' broad shoulders.



NBA.com

www.nba.com ★★★★★

In an attempt to protect its multimillion-dollar cash cow, the NBA has virtually killed off all online competition with this all-singing, all-dunking über site. The video highlights are excellent, and the player profile facts and figures will make Stato weep. Keep up with the action via the live scoreboard or, if you're really keen, spend $19.95 on audio commentary on every NBA gam.

New York Knicks Fan Page

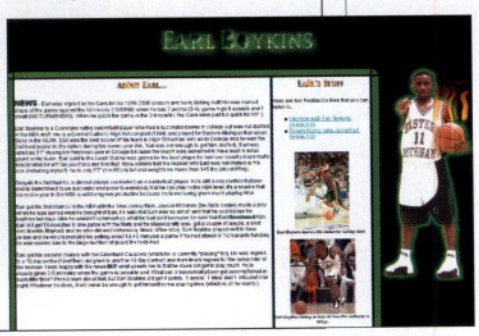
www.allsports.com/nba/knicks
★★★★★

This one is 'For The Fans, By The Fans', so they've only got themselves to blame for the Knickerbocker Medley Mix of *I'm a Knicks Fan* – and there's plenty more rallying cries where this came from. The Knicks surprised everyone last season by reaching the NBA finals, only to lose against San Antonio. If you can't make it to their home ground of Madison Square Garden, follow them here.

WHEN SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Size doesn't matter

Basketball isn't just about being tall. Honestly. Okay, so being 6'10" is an advantage when the hoop is 10 feet high, but watch the average game and not every shot is a highlight real slam. It's also about speed, agility and passing, which is where players like Earl Boykins are important. Earl, you see, is only 5'5", although one college coach listed him two inches taller, because he was embarrassed to have such a short player on his team. Earl currently plays for the Cleveland Cavaliers, and although he's only been getting short minutes, he's been putting up some reasonable numbers in pre-season games – unsurprisingly, he's not managed a block so far. Find out more at *boykins.virtualave.net*



one of the biggest games of the season 18 December London Towers take on London Leopards in a local derby
www.slamonline.com

BLUE
SQ.
online betting
"if you're
talking bookies
i take the mouse
not the man"
click into the excitement of
live internet betting at
www.bluesq.com
and leave
the old-style bookies behind.
Over 18s only. Rules apply – available on request at
www.bluesq.com

This used to be my playground

PLAYGROUND GAMES Just because you're not a kid anymore doesn't mean you can't play conkers

Just think... somebody actually writes this stuff

Power Conkers

www.powerconkers.com.au

★★★

Forget soaking 'em in vinegar before roasting them in an oven – Power Conkers are far better than your average horse chestnut. They're bright and plastic, allowing battles year round, and come complete with 'power shields' which fly off when you strike a direct hit. They might be sturdy, but the excitement of reducing your opponent's bog-standard nut to a messy pulp is lost somewhat.

Best Games in Small World

www.richardsonps.act.edu.au

★★★★

Aww. Straight from the horse's mouth comes this selection of games by the little people down under at Richardson Primary School in Canberra. Learn how to play clapping, string, skipping and 'no gear' games, all of which are accompanied by diagrams drawn by the children themselves. We therefore headed straight for 'Dumps' but, despite it's promising name, the reality (it's a jacks game) isn't half as exciting.

One trip too many and she thinks she can fly

Land of Marbles

www.landofmarbles.com

★★★

Peewee Fancy Bennington might sound like a winner of Crufts, but apparently it's a marble, and there are plenty more where that came from. Get your mitts on specimens you wouldn't let your kids touch in a million years, such as the Akro Agate Purple Popeye – a snip at just $70 – for example. After, read the big boys' soppy poems about when they used to actually *play* with them. Now there's a novel idea...

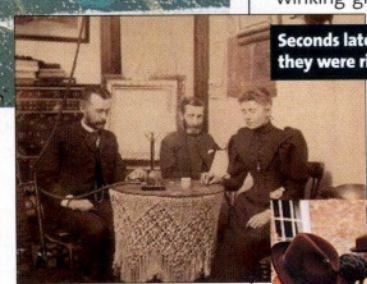
Games Kids Play

www.gameskidsplay.net ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Go all gooey about your childhood with this site, which has over 250 games of the sort that schoolkids used to play before the invention of Pokemon. Although it's an American site and the British games section is limited to the curiously named 'Tiggy Off Ground', all the old favourites are there, including Sardines and that classic break-time activity, Tag. But we liked the bizarre games best: Kick the Can and the stonking Mother, May I?, which are proving particularly popular in the office (in the few precious minutes we have left after working on the magazine, you understand).

The golden rules of conkers – keep your nuts covered


Seconds later they were rioting

Tiddlywinks

www.tiddlywinks.org ★★★★

In case you ever dared think differently, tiddlywinks is, in fact, 'a complex game of strategy and tactics'. Best go to this site, then. This is the meeting place for 'winkers worldwide': there are details on the game's history, rules and advice on how to form your own club. Top of the tips is the 'winking' glossary: avoid any embarrassing social faux pas by making sure you know that vital difference between a scrunge, squop-up and gromp.

best sport sites

where can I...

JOIN A TEAM?

www.sportlive.net

Check out the 'grass roots' section for links to hundreds of local teams.

www.golflink.com

Find a golf club, or even a partner, through the classified sections.

BUY ACCESSORIES ONLINE?

www.sportsconnection.co.uk

Shop online for sportswear, equipment and accessories.

www.sportspages.co.uk

Net bookshop specialising in sporting titles.

LEARN THE RULES?

www-uk.cricket.org

Cricket's home page explains the lbw rule for confused Americans.

www.referee.com

The men in black – you're certain to get your rule questions answered here. Just don't argue with what they tell you.

FIND A NEW SPORT?

www.sportszine.co.uk

Comprehensive, well-organised links to UK sites for everything from athletics to wrestling.

www.outdoors.co.uk

Useful information on hiking, hang-gliding and just about everything in between.

GET OFF THE COUCH?

www.ticketmaster.co.uk/sport

Online ticket ordering for all major UK sports events.

www.premierswap.com

Claims to be an 'Internet market' for football fans, with ticket swaps and sales.

LEARN A MARTIAL ART?

www.martialarts.net

Links and information for all manner of martial arts – plus it's an ISP to boot.

www.konjakushin. freeserve.co.uk

Let the National School of Karate show you the ropes.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.martial-arts

Newsgroup covering all martial arts.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Enjoy the best of sport trivia and rules at ***www.2play.com/surveys.htm***

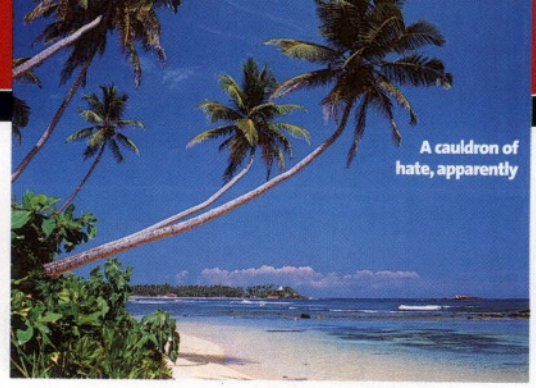
GET CHATTING?

www.landofmarbles.com

Yes, you really can discuss marbles – and we don't mean the credit card.

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY; PICTURES: UNIVERSAL PICTORIAL PRESS, REX

'A one-way ticket to damnation, please'


A cauldron of hate, apparently

HOLIDAYS FROM HELL Forget that relaxing fortnight in Benidorm; why not spend your vacation dodging bullets in one of the world's most dangerous places?

AKC Kyrgyz Concept

www.akc.com.kg ★★★★

Kyrgyzstan. Can't pronounce it – certainly don't want to go there, given that 'mugging and theft are increasing... foreigners are a particular target.' These folks, however, are keen to take you on a tour through the Central Asian state, 'a welcome oasis of blue lakes, green forests and white peaks.' Surely some mistake?

Chechen Republic Online

www.amina.com ★★★

'If you have a friend from the Chechen Republic, you will never be in misery.' You will, however, be embroiled in a bloody civil war; since the breakaway from Russia in 1994, the Republic has been in a state of constant turmoil. Perhaps you might like to opt for Skegness instead.

Kashmir

www.geocities.com/~khawarb/kashmir.htm ★

Haji G M Butt would love you to be his guest for a brief holiday on one of his 'luxuriously furnished' house-boats in 'a scenic location with charming surroundings,' in the Indian region of Kashmir. That'll be the same Kashmir where there's 'a serious risk of kidnapping', according to the FO, then. Hurry, places are limited.

Fun, fun, fun fundamentalists

DON'T EVEN GO THERE

Vile vacations

While most of us would rather have several vital organs removed without the benefit of anaesthetic than holiday in the middle of a war zone, there are some for whom the whiff of danger is essential to a successful break. Such thrill-seekers regard Fielding's Danger Finder (*www.fieldingtravel.com/df/index.htm*) as a bible. This *Lonely Planet* from hell seeks out the most torrid spots on earth, and tells you how to reach them. It even gives advice on getting into Iraq, Iran and Somalia. Remember, though: 'Visiting these places may get you killed or earn you the nickname Stumpy.'

Miftah Shamali Algeria

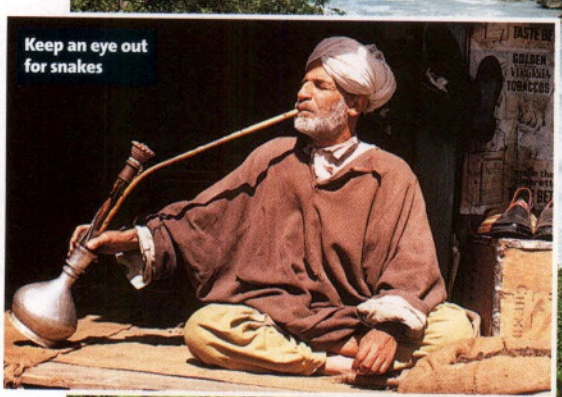
i-cias.com/m.s/algeria/index.htm ★★★

'Algeria has had its appeal in low tourist numbers.' Hmm. Could that be because the Foreign Office warns that 'visits of more than a few days are particularly hazardous due to the risk of terrorists?' This tourist-oriented site does point out a few of the possible pitfalls, but assures travellers they'll be 'fairly safe'. So that's OK, then.

Solomon Islands

www.hideawayholidays.com.au/hir_.htm ★★★

How refreshing: a travel agent site that effectively tells you not to buy their product. Hideaway Holidays thoughtfully includes details of the 'civil unrest' affecting the Islands – as well as the packages that'll take you there. When can we leave?


Keep an eye out for snakes

thenet AWARD Foreign and Commonwealth office

www.fco.gov.uk/travel/ ★★★★★

Passport? Check. Clean underwear? Check. Suitcases? Check. Tickets? Check. Travel insurance? Check. Bulletproof vest? Darn, forgotten it... You'll be sure to need some protection if you don't heed the Government advice on this site, where the most dangerous places on earth are listed with strong warnings on why you really shouldn't go there. Ever. The current no-nos include East Timor (what, really?) and large parts of earthquake-stricken Turkey. Apart from anything else, it's brilliant fun.

'And on your left, you'll see...'

Sri Lanka

asiatours.net/srilanka ★★★★

Why not take in the stunning beauty and 'cosmopolitan people' of Sri Lanka by staying in one of the delightful Colombo hotels offered here? Perhaps because you might be a tad worried to learn that 'since 1995 over 300 people have been killed and over 2000 wounded' in serious bomb attacks there?

Tajikistan

www.tourintel.ru/hotels/e_tj_dyu_tks.html ★

My, what a delightful hotel, situated in the heart of Dushanbe, capital of former Russian republic Tajikistan... where, by the way, travel is strongly advised against after citizens introduced a self-imposed curfew, so terrified were they of the civil unrest all around them.

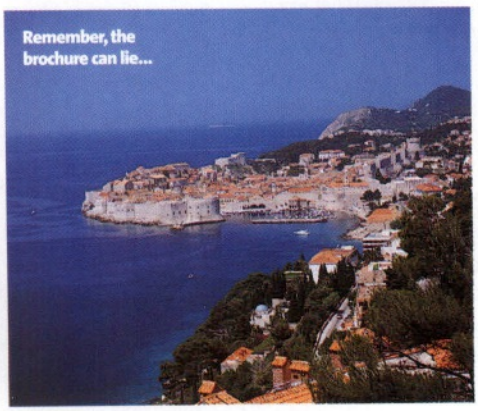
YemenAir

home.earthlink.net/~yemenair/ ★

Come fly the friendly skies with YemenAir, principal airline of this delightful Middle Eastern country. On arrival, you'll find 'random armed kidnapping' and 'a threat to British interests from global terrorism.' Which makes the Dead Kennedys' *Holiday In Cambodia* sound like a weekend in Margate.

Yugoslavia – The Essential Guide

www.yuguide.com ★★★


Remember, the brochure can lie...

Yearning for a getaway spot untouched by Western influences (apart from the odd gun-wielding UN peacekeeper)? Why not try the former Yugoslavian states of Serbia and Montenegro, where the welcome's sure to be as warm as the fires still raging throughout many major cities?

best travel sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND THE BEST HOLIDAY AND FLIGHT DEALS?

expedia.co.uk
Microsoft's free-to-use site with flights and holidays.
www.lastminute.com
Massively popular and useable guide to late deals and bargains.
www.a2btravel.co.uk
Britain's biggest online travel agent, so a useful starting point.
www.ebookers.com
An excellent site for finding cheap flights and holidays.

GET DESTINATION INFO?

www.Travel-Library.com
Resources and links for any country you care to name.
www.roughguides.com
From the publishers of the guides comes a definitive site.
www.vtourist.com
Talk to fellow tourists before you set off, or use the directory for more information.
www.lonelyplanet.com
Everything you'd expect from the purveyors of quality travel guides.

GET DOS AND DONT'S?

www.etravel.org
Excellent online travel mag, with destination guides and handy tips.
www.tips4trips.com
1000 'tips for trips' posted on a message board by kind fellow travellers.
www.totaltravel.net
Advice and experiences, plus links to airlines, hotels and all-important weather warnings.
www.travelsafetytips.com
Find out what happens when you stumble off the beaten tourist track.

FIND CHEAP ROUTES?

www.geocities.com/TheTropics/8168/travel.html
Backpacker's paradise – youth hostels, cheap B&Bs and advice.
www.budgettravel.com
Vast, interactive guide to getting the best from cities on a budget.
www.stratpub.com
Links and advice on cheap travel from worldwide trippers.
www.backpackeurope.com
Plot yourself a cheaper route across Europe before you go, with this guide.

SPEND A DAY OUT IN BRITAIN?

www.LondonTown.com/index2.html
Everything to do and see in this, our nation's glorious capital.
www.virgin.net/daysout
Those nice people at Virgin tell you exactly where to go. In the best possible way, of course.
www.smoothhound.co.uk
Accommodation, guest houses and hotels across the UK. Helps avoid the Basil Fawltys of this world.
www.knowhere.co.uk
Astoundingly accurate and unfailingly hysterical guide to the backwaters of Britain.

FIND A BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPERT?

www.equator-net.co.uk
Portal for business travellers, with articles on finding the best deal.
www.thetrip.com
Look up flights, hotels and car hire firms for the business traveller.
www.business-travel.co.uk
Business travel information under one conveniently designed roof.
newhome.biztravel.com
So useful it'll even track your air miles for you.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

soc.culture.yugoslavia
Find out exactly what your chances of being killed are before you set out on your trip.

etravel.org: a great source for travel news

JOIN A MAILING LIS

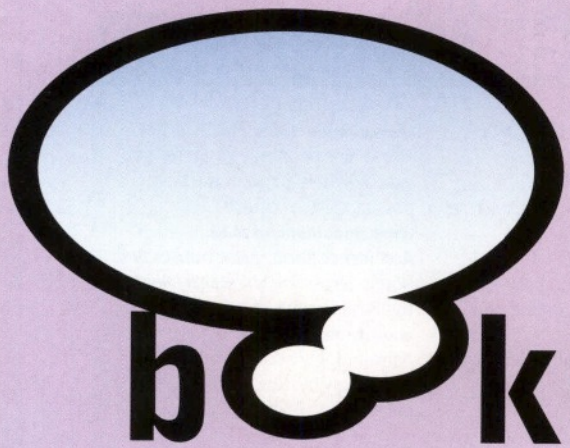
Join the pack at the Intern Network list. Put 'subscrib message to ***listserv@sunny***

GET CHATTING?

www.londonnet.co.uk
Chat away 'till your heart's on life in the capital.

Looking for more Travel sites? Turn to Need to Know on page 108

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY



bookmark www.ebookers.com

ebookers.com presents the easiest way to book travel on-line, with savings up to 65%.

"it aims to be so useful and engaging that it will become our first port of call when we log on to the net."

Mark Hodson, Sunday Times Website of the Week.

The destination for your imagination. . .

You sure it's just a rash?

NASTY ILLNESSES Next time you've got a touch of flu, count yourself lucky – you could have one of these deeply unpleasant and frequently deadly diseases

African Sleeping Sickness

www.selu.edu/Academics/Depts/Biology/Courses/GB10112/Sleep/ ★★

This is an unfortunate and decidedly unpleasant fatal disease carried by African flies, still near impossible to cure despite extensive research. And if you can't catch the disease, why not get the T-shirt from ***www.bugshirts.com***, where all manner of illnesses are available 'in a more convenient format'? Did we hear the word 'tasteless', anyone?

Anthrax

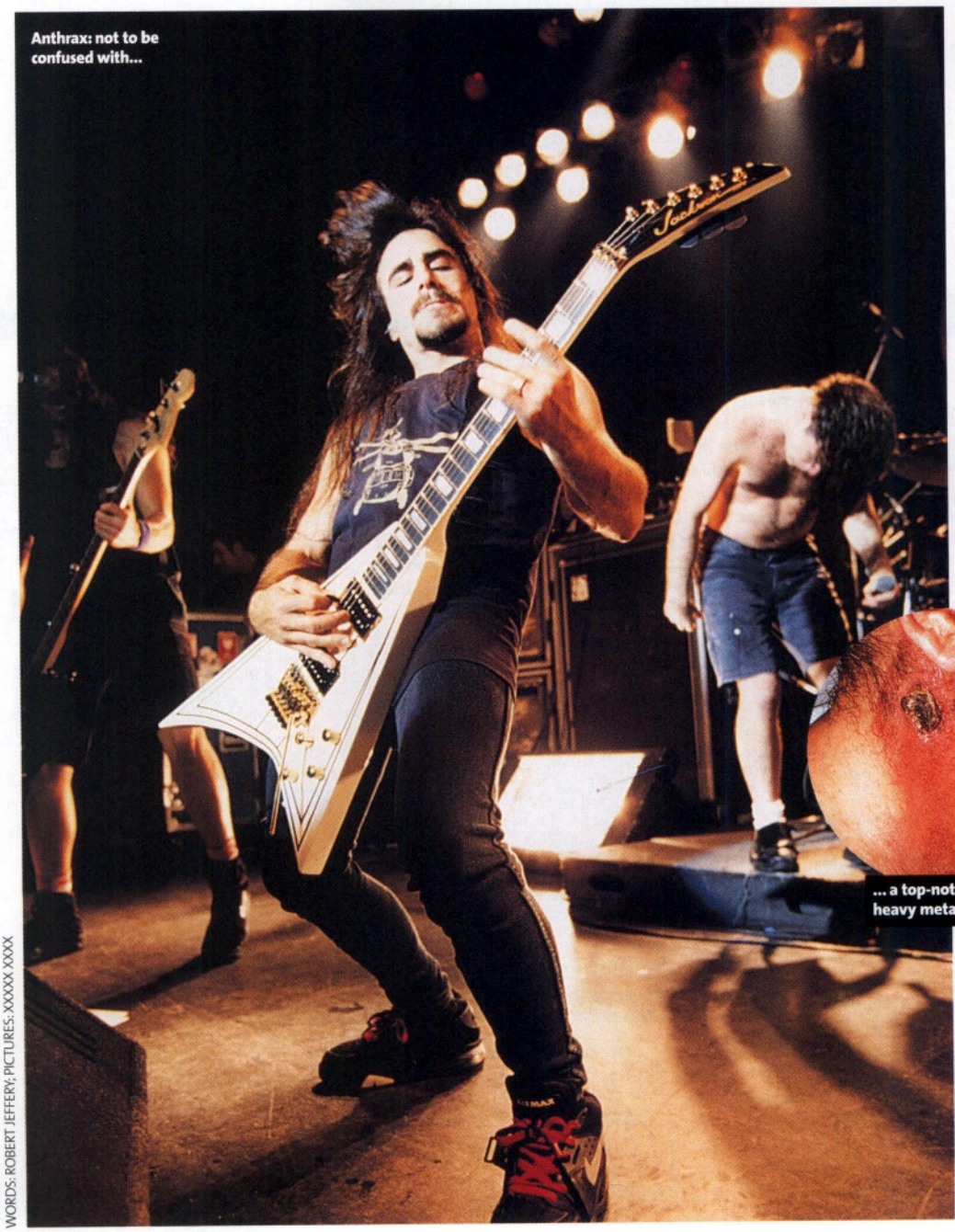
external.aomc.org/ComDiseases/Anthrax.html ★★★

No, not the 80s poodle rockers (exposure to whose music did, admittedly, sometimes cause instant paralysis), but an equally unsavoury viral disease that is spread by animal fur, and was recently developed as a potential chemical warfare agent for use against US troops. Extremely nasty, then, but we're still not really sure which of the two is worse, to be brutally honest...

Botulism

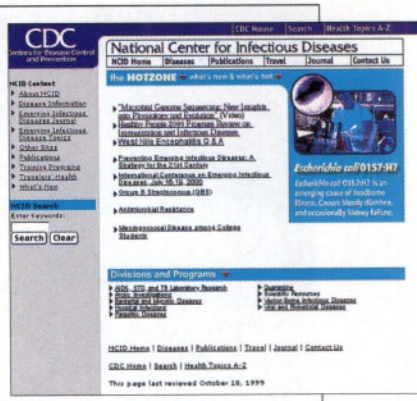
ext.msstate.edu/pubs/is734.htm ★★

'When in doubt, throw it out,' urges this site. Actually, this is sound advice, given that it's nigh-on impossible to predict the rapid onset of botulism, which is carried in canned food by the most deadly toxin that is known to man. Progressive respiratory paralysis, the inevitable result of the aforementioned infection, usually causes a deeply uncomfortable death within six (that's six) days. Fun, fun, fun.



Anthrax: not to be confused with...

... a top-notch 80s heavy metal band



National Center For Infectious Diseases

thenet AWARD

www.cdc.gov/nci-dod/ ★★★★★

No horror is left unexplored in the recesses of the Internet (try searching for a store that sells goat's cheese if you're unconvinced). And here is an almanac of afflictions: every disease known to man, together with horrendous descriptions of their debilitating effects. Take Brainerd diarrohea, for example: 'Users will experience 10-20 episodes per day of explosive, watery diarrohea, characterised by urgency.' You'll never be

CJD Foundation

cjdfoundation.org ★★★

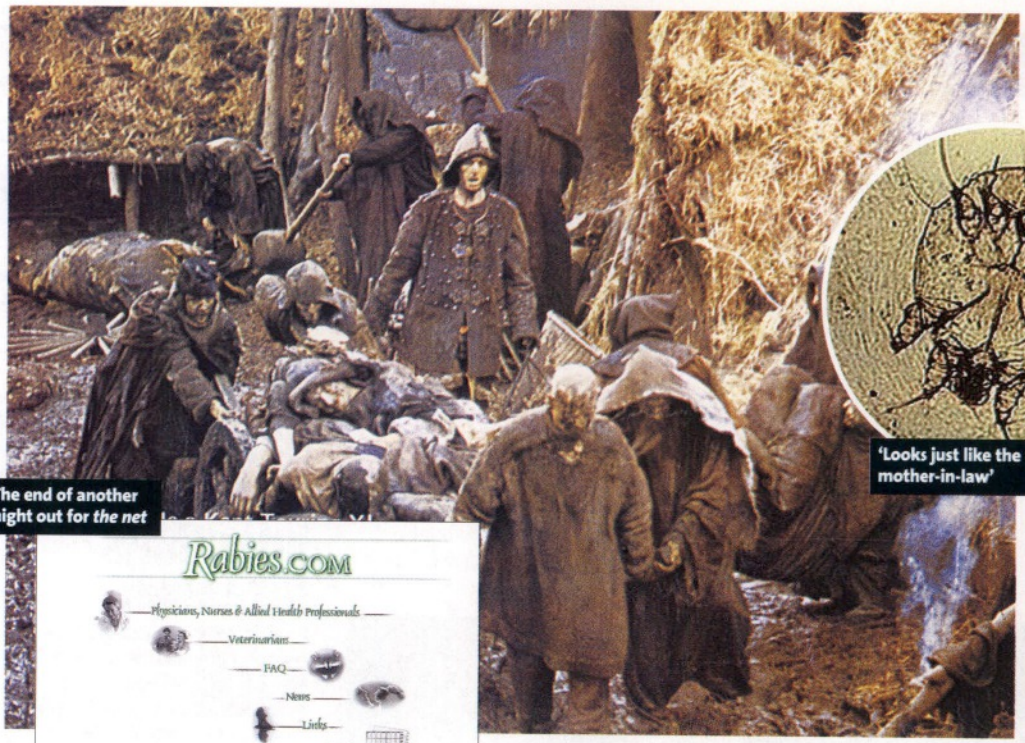
Mooooooooooo! It's those blasted mad cows and the rapid spongification of their brains. Strange to consider how one humble cheese-burger can lead to the loss of all mental and physical functions – but then employees of several major burger chains have been living proof of that for years.

Death In 20 Days

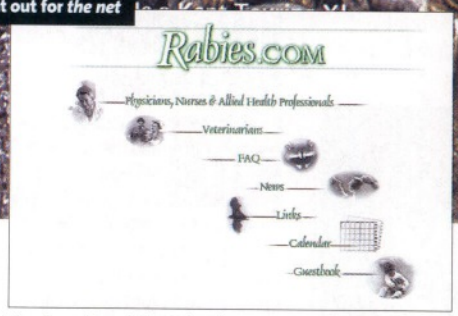
www.bates.edu/~tnorswor/index.htm ★★★

Here's a novel idea. Let's explain the deadly Ebola virus (one of the least pleasant diseases it's possible to

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: XXXXX XXXX



The end of another night out for *the net*



catch, given the violent death it invariably entails) in the form of an amusing role-playing story. Will you choose to hang out with the infected monkeys or take your chances with the condemned humans? As you'll discover, it's all immaterial – you'll die in the end anyway!

National Necrotizing Fasciitis Foundation

www.nnff.org ★★★★

Welcome to the mother of all diseases, the 'Flesh Eating Bacteria', which devours its victims alive in a matter of days. Of course, the scientific reality of the matter is somewhat less dramatic than all that, but it's every bit as fatal. And best of all, there's no way of avoiding it. Yum.

Plague

www.ento.vt.edu/HIS/Plague.html ★★

Millions were wiped out when the Bubonic Plague (dubbed the 'Black Death' for the colour it turned its victims' skin) swept across Europe. So contagious was the condition that even being in the same room as a sufferer could prove fatal. Unlikely to make a comeback, but still worth reading up on – just in case.

'Looks just like the mother-in-law'

Rabies

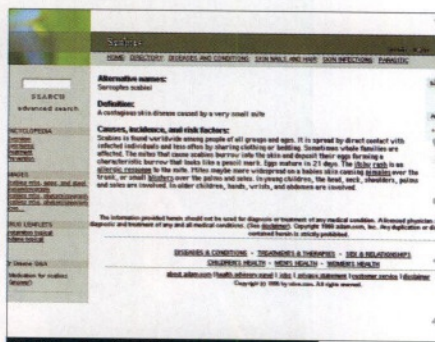
www.rabies.com ★★★★

Virtually unheard of here for decades but still a popular cause of painful death in the States and South America, rabies is generally regarded as best avoided, what with all that mouth foaming. Interestingly, new research suggests fictional vampires may have been inspired by rabies victims. Grrr.

Scabies

www.adam.com/ency/article/000830.htm ★★★

That's lice to you and me: little buggers that burrow under the skin and leave their eggs to mature and infest. Full diagnosis and treatment info is here, along with delightful photos of mites and eggs. Just try viewing them without feeling the need to scratch yourself violently.



Scabies: simply itching to get at you

CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME

Hand it to 'em

Can you digit? Yes you can

Just when you thought it was safe... along comes another debilitating condition caused by the Internet. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (see *www.sechrest.com/mmg/cts/*) is a tendon condition affecting the wrist, which restricts the mobility of the fingers and causes arm pain. CTS has recently been found in regular Net surfers; symptoms include finger numbness. In advanced cases, surgery is the only option. Another good reason to use a magazine rather than a search engine, then.

best health sites ★★★★★

where can I...

GET AN ONLINE DIAGNOSIS?

www.mayo.edu

Tell your fears to the resident doctor and get them put to rest.

www.pathfinder.com/drweil

The most celebrated online doctor answers your health worries.

FIND OUT ABOUT PREGNANCY?

www.ukmums.co.uk

Everything about bringing up baby.

www.babycenter.com

Masses for mums-to-be.

CHECK OUT A HEALTH CONTROVERSY?

www.viagra.com

Info on the drug that revitalises your love life.

www.ves.org.uk

The English voluntary euthanasia site.

BUY HEALTH SUPPLIES?

www.thehealthshop.co.uk

Fitness equipment and supplements.

www.remedy-zone.com

All manner of health remedies.

FIND AN OFFICIAL HEALTH SITE?

www.bma.org.uk

Info on how to become a doctor, plus health links.

www.ukmums.co.uk – but new dads are most welcome to drop by as well

www.doh.gov.uk/nhsexec/direct.htm/

Healthcare help via NHS Direct.

TRY AN ALTERNATIVE?

www.altguide.com

Find an alternative therapist.

www.reiki.org/reikinews/reikinews.html

Energy fields aligned.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.support.diet

Get dieting help from fellow fatties.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

For diet support, send an email marked 'info dieting-digest' to ***majordomo@listserv.prodigy.com***

GET CHATTING?

www.diettalk.com

Will 'get you through your moments and keep you losing weight'.

Any Video. Any DVD. Any Time.

The UK's widest selection of Videos and DVD's to buy online. Free Delivery Worldwide. Video Hunt™ Service. Gift wrapping service.

www.blackstar.co.uk

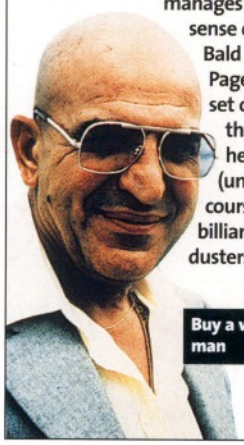
the UK's biggest video store

The Baldman's Home Page

www.thebaldman.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Of course, hair loss is no laughing matter, which is why most of this superbly informative site for the follically-challenged addresses readers in a soothing voice – 'So you're going bald?', the opening page gently coos. Among the many diverse and thorough articles there are such thoughtful chin-stroking musings as 'Hair Transplant Mega Sessions: better or just bigger?'. And if that fails to satisfy, there's always the rather gruesome 'Actual Hair Transplant – with pictures!'. Despite its helpful and reassuring tone the site still manages to retain a sense of humour: the Bald Man's Joke Page is actually a set of links, rather than a whole heap of (unfunny, of course) jokes about billiard balls and dusters.



Buy a wig, man

A drastic way to disguise a mullet

Hair today, gone tomorrow

BARNETS The struggle for half-decent hair is one of mankind's most tortuous. Fight it out online

Bob Hair Worship Page

www.informatik.tu-muenchen.de/~kuerten/spec/bob.html ★★★★

We are prepared to excuse most bizarre obsessions that make their way onto the Net – Spam, Bagpuss, Torvill and Dean – but bobbed hair? The work that has gone into the site is scary – there's hundreds of pics of bobbed celebs, and fanatics can search the archives by style, rating or length. 'Bob haircuts should be worshipped in a shining cathedral, not a rusty toolshed,' urges Webmaster Thomas. Whatever turns you on...

Scary Spice missed her weekly trim

E-makeover

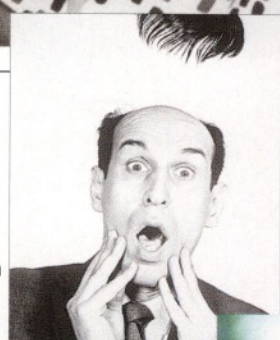
www.emakeover.com ★★★

E-makeover proudly promises to create a 'fabulous new you!', but if the demo is anything to go by, we'd rather stick to the same old us. The basic premise is simple: join up (free of charge), then send in a scan of your mug. E-makeover then slap a selection of virtual hair styles, makeovers, and even lips onto you, before letting you view the transformation. The idea's a gem in theory, but the practice is let down quite significantly by the dodgy hats they select for you, and glasses that even Dame Edna would balk at.

Hairdos

Hairdos.com ★★★★

Abandon those aspirations of the now oh-so-dated Rachel cut for something a little more realistic from Hairdos. There's a wealth of photographic styles for men, women and children: search for your ideal barnet by colour or length. The makeovers are good for a laugh – witness the extraordinary transformations which, of course, have *nothing* to do with obscene quantities of make-up and lighting so soft you can just about see the outline. It brings home exactly how many people out there have hair dilemmas – the site's had 1.5 million hits so far.



Just another normal day at the Dyson test centre

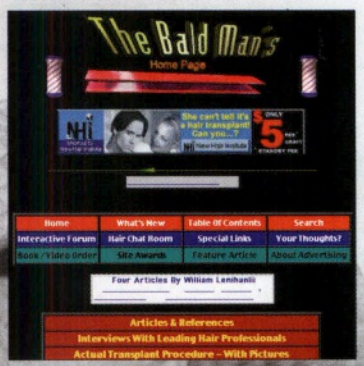
Hair World

www.hairworld.com ★★★

In need of a trim in Taiwan? A bob in Brazil? Grooming in Greenland? Then head for Hair World, where you can find a list of salons for pretty much any part of the world. Anyone with a hair problem can leave a message on the board, in the hope that someone will help. It's all there, from going blonde to 'hair distress': 'I am trying to find hairnets with no elastic for my 92-year-old grandmother', pleads one poor punter. As we went to press, he'd received no reply – rather unsurprisingly.

Keegan: mullet always be this way?

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY; PICTURES: MOVIESTORE COLLECTION, RETNA, KOBAL COLLECTION, ALLSPORT



MULLET MADNESS

Something fishy

It's easy to laugh at other people's dodgy haircuts when we know that the photographic evidence of our own follicle faux pas is safely tucked away in a drawer, so make the most of the opportunity by paying a visit to *www.mullet.co.uk*, a celebration of that most hideous of hairstyles. Chuckle at the celebrity mullets, ponder the theory of how the 'neck blanket' came into being, and then send in your own horror pics – or those of others. Then head straight for the North American Mullet Page at *www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Hills/6906/* to discover exactly why Michael Flatley is the Lord of the Mullet. Those with a nervous disposition are advised to look away now.

Stand aside, Brad Pitt, it's Michael

Salon Web

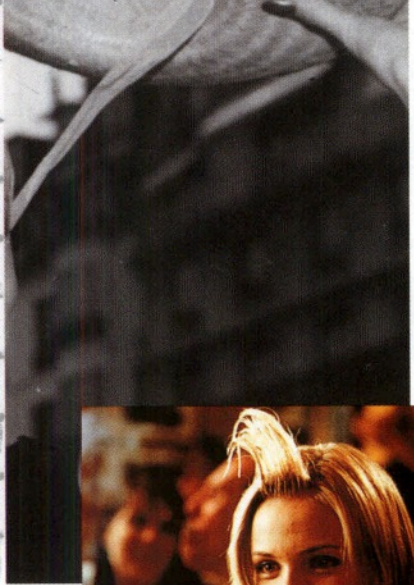
www.salonweb.com ★★★★

It might look as dull as dirty bath water, but Salon Web proclaims itself 'the Ultimate Hair Site', and it's comprehensive, all right. There's loads of articles on hair loss, how to cope with different types of hair, shampoos and conditioners, as well as perming and colouring. Hair-raisingly thorough.

The Secrets Of Hair

library.advanced.org/26829/ ★★

Prepare to be astounded by the wealth of fascinating facts on this site. Shirley Temple always had 56 curls on her sweet little head! You can hang up a chocolate bar with a hair! Astonishing as all this may be, it's fair to say that the most compelling thing about the site is the dodgy translation from the original German.



of your locks with advice and tips on how to avoid the seemingly-ubiquitous frizz. After, share your curl stories with Madison, Shelbi, and other ringlet-topped lasses – curl power. NB, not to be confused with 'Short and Curly' site.

best style sites ★★★★★

where can I...

Cameron Diaz-ster

BUY CLOTHES ONLINE?

www.fashionmall.com
Mammoth US site offering discount goods to suit all tastes.
www.tops.co.uk
Get all the goodies from Top Shop and Top Man stores without venturing onto the High Street.
www.next.co.uk
As above, but with a slightly less confusing design.
www.boo.com
The online clothing superstore opens at last...

FIND THE LATEST FASHION NEWS?

www.fashion-icon.com
From street style to room design, this site keeps you up to date with the latest trends and ensures you'll always look in touch.
www.vogue.co.uk
Get the style bible without spending your hard-earned pennies.
www.fbia.com
The Fashion and Beauty Internet Association puts us on the right track with this hub of fashion info.
www.widemedia.com/fashionuk/
Useful fashion portal with plenty of highbrow news.

SEE THE LATEST FASHION SHOWS?

www.firstview.com/home.html
Thousands of pics from the latest collections fresh from the catwalk. Fashion show coverage, plus news and links to fashion mags.
www.fashion.net/shows/
View videos of all the latest fashion shows as they roll off the catwalk.
www.worldmedia.fr/fashion/
Live TV fashion coverage, plus links to designers and their collections.

CHECK OUT THE LATEST TALENT?

www.supermodel.com
Informative site, packed with super-model stats, facts and interviews.
www.modelnews.com
Including Model of the Month and an interesting feature on how much the big babes in fashion earn.
www.webtalent.com
Online modelling directory of wannabes. Join up, it's free. Or just have a laugh at the other entries.
www.fashionfile.co.uk
A database of models, old and new.

READ FASHION DO'S AND DON'TS?

www.manslife.com/clothes
If you think men's fashion is an oxymoron, visit soon. Topics covered include 'unsightly zipper droop.'
www.beautynet.com
Having a bad hair day? Visit this no-frills site for advice on problems.
www.nystyle.com
Get the latest tips on staying ahead from the world's fashion capital.
www.beautyworks.com
Hundreds of links and tips for improving your visage.

GET AN ONLINE MAKEOVER?

www.virtualmakeover.com
Purchase the software that'll let you change your looks at a click.
www.compucloz.com
Try it for free online. Hours of fun.
www.makemeover.com
Change your style using a photo.
www.vidalsassoon.com
The hair and make-up expert dispenses invaluable makeover tips.

Discover a whole new you at www.compucloz.com

JOIN A NEWSGROUP?

alt.baldspot
Losing your barnet? Share your woes with others here.

FIND A MAILING LIST?

Subscribe from ***www.makeupdiva.com*** and the make-up diva will authoritatively answer all your cosmetics and skincare questions each week.

GET CHATTING?

www.beautybuzz.com
Can't decide on your make-up first thing in the morning? Then discuss it here as soon as you rise and shine.

Looking for more Fashion sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

Long Haired Men

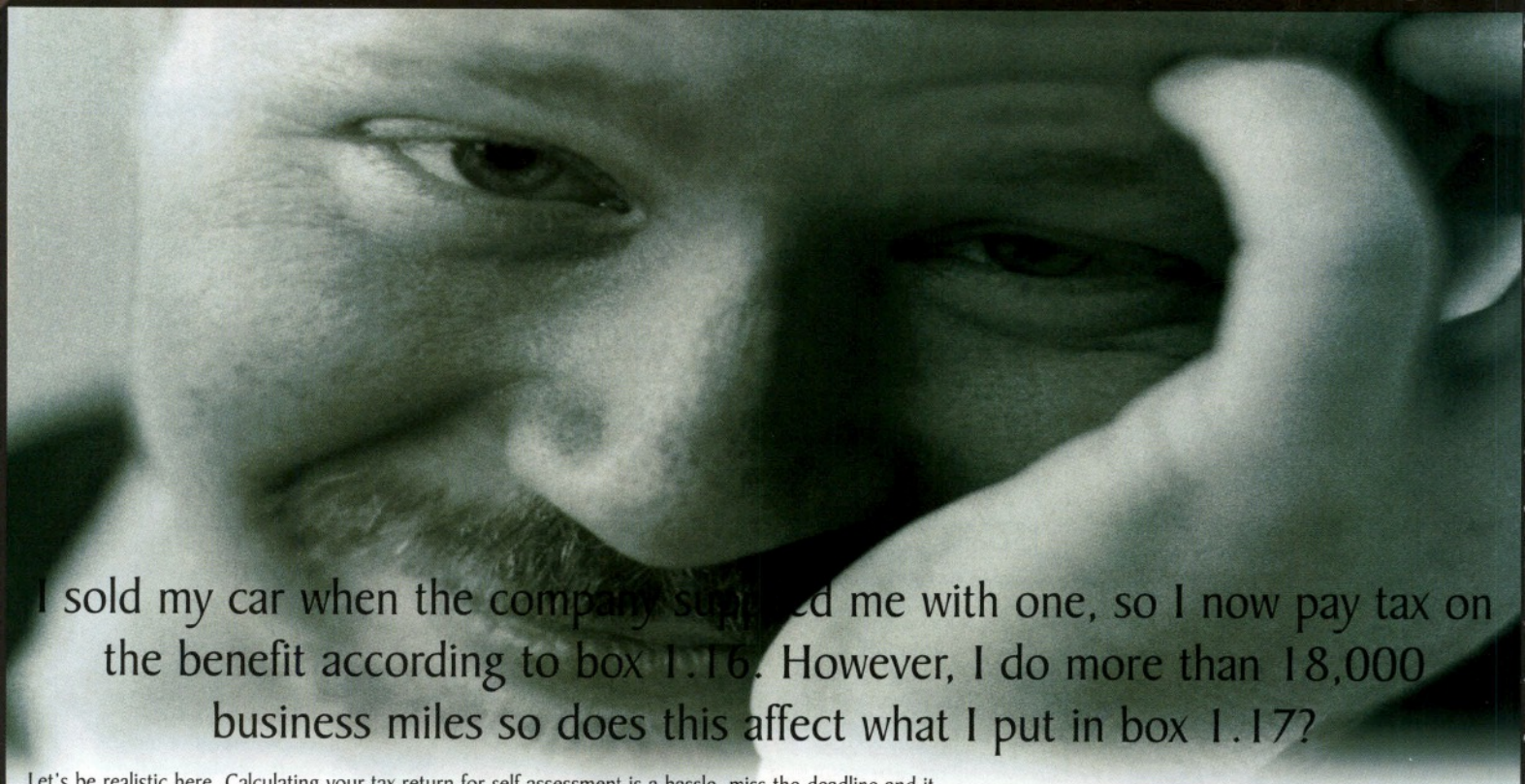
www.longhairedmen.com ★★★★

Good grief. For ladies who like their men with flowing locks, here's the perfect opportunity to meet a few. There's hundreds of hunks to drool over: the lovely 'Alan' (37, member of Iron Maiden tribute band) and the cheeky 'Rain' (enjoys 'words', 'fantasy' and 'expressing thoughts') to name but two. There are tips on how to keep that long mane beautifully groomed, and many an email address to converse with the long-haired-lovely of choice. Potential beefcakes should take note: contrary to appearances, a bike, guitar and a penchant for heavy metal are *not* prerequisites for inclusion.

Naturallycurly.com

Naturallycurly.com ★★★★

Set up by three women who 'shared a history of fighting their curls and kinks', this site is a beauty for anyone blessed (or cursed, depending on your point of view) with a head full of curls. Naturally, Curly shows how to make the most



I sold my car when the company supplied me with one, so I now pay tax on the benefit according to box 1.16. However, I do more than 18,000 business miles so does this affect what I put in box 1.17?

Let's be realistic here. Calculating your tax return for self assessment is a hassle, miss the deadline and it becomes a costly hassle. So what do you do..? Spend three or four hours working out your tax liabilities, figure out how much you owe, answer a hundred and one questions, double check your sums and spend another hour double checking your double check.

On the other hand, you may find it easier to use etax? Simply log on to our web site, complete the simple form and we'll calculate your tax, produce the necessary documents and, once approved, email them on to the Inland Revenue. Totally confidential, totally reliable and totally hassle free. Giving you more time to concentrate on the other taxing things in your life.

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Sony DVPK330	£549.95
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Pioneer DV525	£349.95
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Hotbox

www.hotbox.co.uk ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

No one with money to burn should be without their very own hovercraft. Happily, Hotbox recognises this, so you can buy one online at its excellent site for £13,000. There's also such extravagant delights as a solar-powered lawnmower for £1,600, Tag McLaren (as in Formula 1, as in £££) hi-fi speakers (£14k) and a V24 offshore racing boat at £36,000. Or you may prefer the rather tasty spray job on the Sinclair Z1 Micro radio – a mere £9.99.

Spend, spend, spend

SPLASH OUT WITH CASH It's all very well making money, but what do you do with it? Blow some big bucks on the Net, of course

That should shut the neighbours up

Cromwell Hospital

www.cromwell-hospital.co.uk ★★

Breast implant or facelift, madam? This swish but comfortable South Kensington establishment (nicely convenient for Harrods and Harvey Nics) will charge you £1,000 for the former and £1,325 for the latter. That excludes doctor's fees and sundry other charges. Fill out the online enquiry form for the full monty.

Displays

freespace.virgin.net/shellscape.pyrotechnics/displays.htm ★★★

If you'd like to watch your money go out with a bang, contact Shellscape. They'll convert it into Roman candles, rockets and Catherine wheels, and then light the (digital) blue touchpaper for you. Their displays have impressed lots of clients and they'll give you a nice do for £30,000+. Well, you wanted a little somethng to celebrate the millennium?

Ferrari: blonde comes as extra

The Garden Pharmacy

www.garden.co.uk ★★★★

This brilliant beauty catalogue site helps you achieve a whole new look without surgery. However, after Elizabeth Arden's Ceramide for the face, £48; Skin Illuminating Complex, £29; Mascara, £13.50 and Browshaper, £15; not forgetting Dior's Eyeshadow Compact, £29; Blush Final, £21.50; Lip Liner, £10; Lip Gloss, £13; Nail Enamel, £11.50 and a dab of Viv Westwood's Boudoir perfume, £90... Dahling, you've just splurged £280 online! Congratulations!

Goffs, Ireland

www.goffs.com ★★★★

This Irish bloodstock company has sold some of the poshest nags in the world for happy breeders. Bidders have included the Maktoums and Benny (ABBA) Andersson. He'll need money, money, money to cover the vet's bills, the stabling, the trainer... and so will you. The site has the auction dates: you can bid for a foal or a yearling at their December sale.

Inverlochy Castle Hotel

www.lochaber.co.uk/inverlochy ★★★

This secluded Scottish castle has been a byword for discreet luxury for more than half a century. It's exclusive: they declined Caprice's custom earlier this year, declaring her presence might attract 'the wrong sort of guest'. The Web site is tartanesque

FOOD OF THE GODS

Egg-ceedingly good

Caviar: choice of Posh and Becks

It's no use saying you don't like the taste. It's just one of the tiresome things about being loaded – you simply have to develop a taste for caviar, or you're letting the side down. Beluga is clearly tops, because it's the tastiest and most expensive at about £25 for an ounce – really, you need at least two ounces per person, or look mean. Just put that big tin on a pile of crushed ice, leave the dinky spoon next to it and let your guests help themselves. Fortnum and Mason (*www.fortnumandmason.co.uk*) have just the hamper: the Sovereign, with a yummy 4.5 kilo tin.

and understated, as the crowned heads and dignitaries who hang about the place no doubt prefer for their £450 per night (in high season). They graciously permit you to email them with bookings.

Maranello Sales

www.racecar.co.uk/maranellosales/ ★★★★

The Ferrari F50 cost £350,000 new in 1995, and the Maranello sales team will track you one down. Even with one careful owner, your prancing horse will probably still do its 0-60 in 3.7 seconds and reach its top speed of 202 mph with a growl which proclaims that you're *filthy* rich. There's a nice Quicktime video to watch, too.

Brewster: knew how to spend

Stocktrade

www.stocktrade.co.uk ★★★

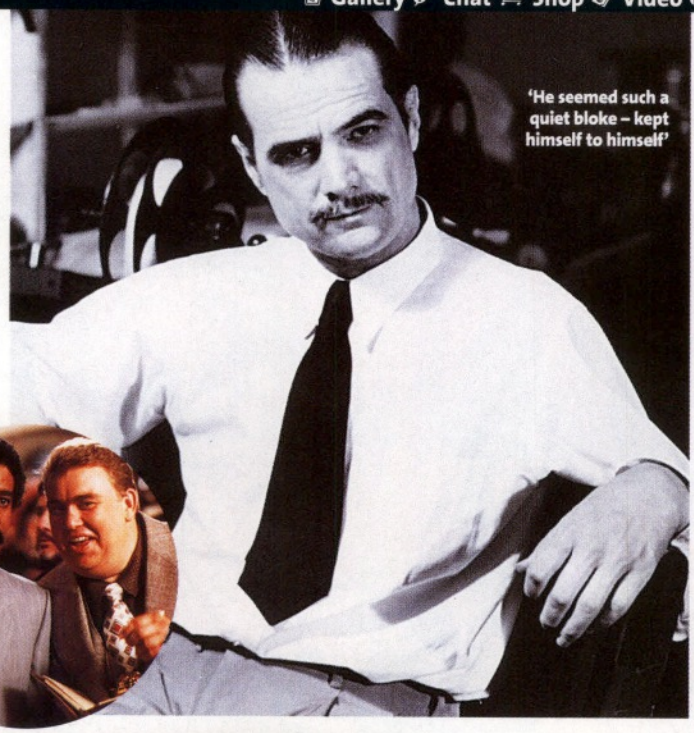
Yes, it's here – the online share-dealing revolution is all set to part you and your loot. If you really want to blow the readies, just set up as a day trader and try to make a profit by injecting vast cash reserves into small price moves, and selling your portfolio at the end of the day. On the other hand, you could let an online stockbroker take the strain. You might even make money.

Taylor Woodrow

www.taywoodspain.co.uk ★★★

When you're in business, you deserve a break. What about investing in a little country hideaway? Indeed, many find that hiding away in another country

Noel and Meg: some might pay



'He seemed such a quiet bloke – kept himself to himself'

(especially one with none of that silly extradition treaty business) is what suits their busy lifestyle best. Take the Costa del Sol. Lovely Taylor Woodrow villas at Los Arqueros, about £315,000 a throw. That villa Las Camelias looks nice... Terms are all clearly stated on the site: pool cleaning and satellite dish extra.

Victor Chandler

www.victorchandler.com ★★★★

Mr Chandler has had the pleasure of coming between many a gentleman and his earnings, in the most civilised way. The politest betting site around has no need for fancy fluorescent type, just reassurance that they're 'ready to cater for all your betting requirements'. That's after you've filled out the form demanding two referees, your company address, bank details and normal bet stake. Not for a casual flutter.

best money sites ★★★★★ where can I...

GET MONEY NEWS AND SHARE PRICES?

www.ft.com
The mother of all money sites: news, prices and analysis.

www.bloomberg.co.uk
Up-to-the-second data for professionals.

www.ukinvest.com
News, real-time quotes and RealAudio.

GET FINANCIAL ANALYSIS?

www.invweek.co.uk
From finance paper *Investment Week*.

www.economist.com
150 years of sagacity online.

www.hemscott.com
Get access to a mine of analysis.

www.wsj.com
The US equivalent of the *Financial Times*.

TRADE SHARES ONLINE?

www.barclays-stockbrokers.co.uk
Offers real-time dealing and advice.

www.stocktrade.co.uk
Dealing service for UK stocks.

www.forex-cmc.co.uk
First online foreign-exchange dealer.

SORT OUT MY FINANCES?

www.thisismoney.com
Online personal finance adviser.

www.iii.co.uk
Advice for individual investors.

www.times-money.co.uk
Advice, glossary and exchange rates.

LEARN ABOUT INVESTING?

www.mrscohen.com
Bernice Cohen on investing money.

www.fool.co.uk
Advice for the learner investor.

Seat of learning: make money fast at Armchair Millionaire

www.armchairmillionaire.com
Guide to making a million.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.cars.ferrari
For fans of the supercar.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Join ***www.casparmarney.com*** and get tips from a leading Forex trader.

GET CHATTING?

investor.msn.com
Join in the Microsoft money fun.

WORDS: ANN OLIVER; PICTURES: ALLSPORT, RETNA, REX, SIPA

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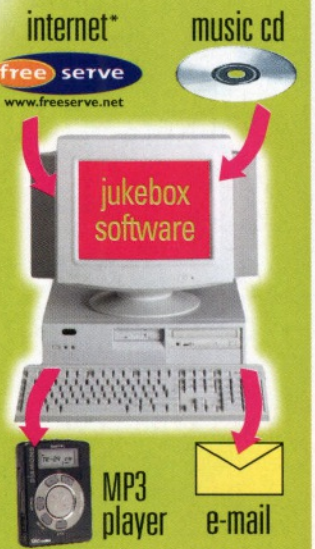

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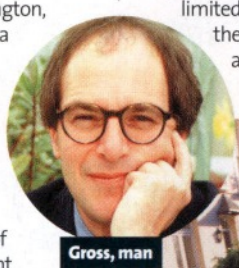
A private view

VIRTUAL TOURS The days of the traditional estate agent are numbered, thanks to the wonder of ipix

Home Directory

www.homedirectory.com ★★★★★

Like the thought of residing in a five-bed des res in Kensington, but your budget is more a compact one-bed in Kennington? Go ahead and check out both, anyway, on one of the sites that pioneered ipix-viewable homes. Home Directory offers both walkaround tours of properties and of different areas of London, so for that authentic 'staggering home from the pub at 11.30' experience, hold down on the edge of the photo and watch it spin.



Gross, man

HomeNet

www.homenetuk.com ★★★★

View homes à la Lloyd Grossman, but with the added bonus of not having to listen to those strangulated vowel movements. Property selection is relatively limited (and pricey), but the views themselves are quite stunning. Enjoy.

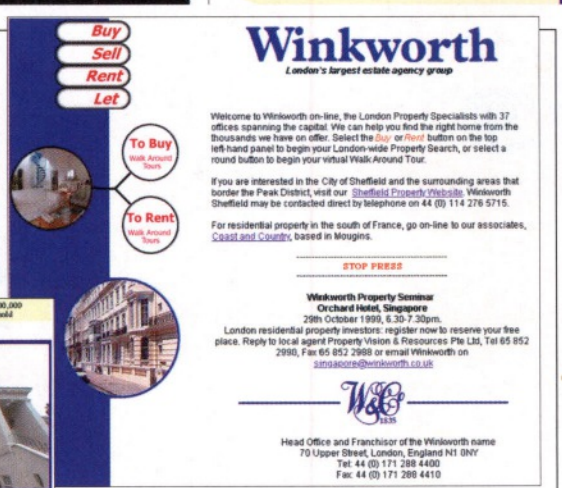
'And if you look in this closet, you'll see a skeleton...'

Winkworth

www.winkworth.co.uk ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

OK, so here's the deal. Thanks to the wonders of ipix (see *www.ipix-eu.com*), the ordinary 2D photograph is a thing of the past. Now you can 'enter' a picture and whizz round 360 degrees. It's just like being there, with the added bonus of no 2D estate agent either. Winkworth is the best of the handful of British estate agents to adopt ipix so far. Our head was spinning after a whizz round a £3.5 million townhouse in St John's Wood – we'll have two of them, please.



Thompson-Leigh

www.thompson-leigh.co.uk ★★★

Thinking of a new kitchen or bathroom? Have a look at one they made earlier, courtesy of Thompson-Leigh. You can whizz round showcase rooms online, though there's no online ordering as yet. Not strictly real estate, but a great excuse to look in people's medicine cabinets all the same.

Virtual-Realtor.net

www.virtual-realtor.net ★★★

A vision of the future. Virtual-Realtor offer sumptuous views of elegant homes in prime sites across the US. Drool away – but whatever you do, don't look at the prices.

best home and garden sites ★★★★★

where can I...

LEARN HOW TO TALK TO A REPAIR MAN?

www.misterfixit.com
Look up your jobs here and be prepared for even the most John Wayne-like of repairpersons.
www.naturalhandyman.com
Listed on the BBC Education Web Guide, another American site that looks after the 'little guy'.

FIND DIY ADVICE?

www.remodelonline.com
An A-Z of home improvement tips. Despite the American bias, there's something for everyone here.
www.doityourself.com
Claims to be the original Internet community for DIYers. There are others now, but it's still good.

GET SOME INSPIRATION?

www.british-bathrooms.org.uk
Planner and product finder and useful fact sheets lead you to that dream bathroom.
www.homebase.co.uk
Well-designed site that offers makeover ideas, plus store info, of course.

GET GARDEN IDEAS?

www.garden.com
Lots of green-fingered tips, plus put a garden together online – with assistance.
www.gardendesign.co.uk
Can't design online as yet, but it offers a postal service.

FIND HOMES FOR SALE BY OWNERS?

www.housemoves.co.uk
Classified ads from around Britain. Also contains useful articles on everything house-related.
uk.classifieds.yahoo.com/uk/re/
Individual ads from the world's most-used portal.

GET SOFTWARE TO DESIGN MY DREAM HOME?

www.cdw.com
Search under 'home design' for a variety of packages.
www.bhg.com/homeplan/
Search for plans that match your needs; features online price guide.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.home.repair
For everything and anything to do with home improvement.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

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subscribe@naturalhandyman.com

GET CHATTING?

communities.msn.com/homegarden/chat.asp Go on, you know you want to – exchange tips with those like-minded DIYers.

Looking for more Travel sites? Turn to Need to Know on page 108

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: HULTON GETTY

www.vitaminic.co.uk

bellissimo

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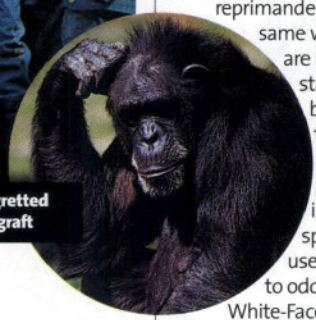
The Japanese Army sparked panic


Elton regretted the hair graft

Animal magic

ZOOS Now you don't have to risk fatal lacerations to get into cages with animals, thanks to the Web

Cleland Wildlife Park

www.cleland.sa.gov.au ★★★★

Thanks to its solitary location, Australia has loads of unique wild beasts. The animals are quite impressive, too. Here you can creep through the park and meet the potoroos, wallaroos, bettongs and goannas. Or while away the hours with the sounds of manic kookaburras and gallahs in the downloadable library. It's an endless source of knowledge for Trivial Pursuit fans, too – where else could you learn that that the word koala really is the aboriginal for 'no drink'? Mine's a eucalyptus leaf.

National Zoo Homepage

www.si.edu/natzoo/ ★★★★

There are two notable things about the National Zoo site: the animal family photo album (including 'Elephant calf throwing sand'), and its light-hearted sense of humour, which is perfect for kids. Take the little darlings to see the birds on the flamingo camingo, and visit 'The fastest Elephant cam in the East'. Then download the audio tour, perfect for educating the little terrors who can't sit still long enough to learn anything.

Oklahoma City Zoo

www.okczoo.com ★★★

OK, so visiting a zoo online isn't quite the same as visiting properly, but Oklahoma Zoo, the oldest in southwest America with over 2,000 animals, still manages to make the whole experience memorable. And this way you get to avoid the hordes of Okie school parties. Compulsive viewing here are the animal Web cams: although the cheetahs are elusive, the koala cam is superb and best of all is gorilla cam – we challenge even the well-hard not to ooh and ahh over the two baby gorillas in their playpen, complete with nappies.

The Singapore Zoological Garden

www.zoo.com.sg ★★★★

We don't know if the camels are reprimanded for spitting in the same way that humans are in the immaculate state of Singapore, but the inmates of this zoo are all beautifully presented. Lots of info on all the species, which is useful when it comes to odd beings like a White-Faced Whistling Duck, ('a gregarious waterbird', don't you know?), and the garden is noted for its collection of rare primates – say hi to the proboscis monkey, who's a spit for Gerard Depardieu.

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD Howletts and Port Lympne Wildlife Park

www.howletts.net ★★★★★

The primary feature of wildlife parks used to be a hurried drive through a monkey enclosure before the little blighters could jump on to your bonnet and rip your windscreen wipers off. Now the power of technology allows you to watch from a safe distance. This excellent wildlife park near Canterbury has six Webcams, all of which are controllable – zoom round the tiger, gorilla and elephant pens to your heart's content. If the Webcams are busy, take a trip on the virtual tour. At least you go home with your wing mirrors intact.

Elephants: they never forget

best animal sites ★★★★★

where can I...

HELP WITH ANIMAL RIGHTS?

www.rspca.org
News and advice from the people who help neglected animals.
www.animalaid.org.uk
The online home of the UK's largest animal rights group.

LEARN ABOUT MY PET'S BEHAVIOUR?

www.suresite.com/md/c/catlady/
CatLady will attempt to answer all your feline behaviour queries.
www.healthypet.com
Primarily devoted to pet health, there's also info on pet behaviour.

VISIT ONLINE PET SHOPS?

www.animail.co.uk
Huge variety of animal goods, from bowls to leads via toys.
www.reilor.co.uk
Pet doors for both dogs and cats from Staywell.

VISIT RESCUE CENTRES?

www.nwnet.co.uk/terryreader/
An excellent online directory of animal rescue centres.
www.dogshome.org
Dogs (and cats) in need of rehousing, at Battersea Dog's Home in London.

LEARN HOW TO CARE FOR MY PET?

www.avma.org/care4pets/
Advice from American vets.
www.rabbit.org/faq/
All aspects of rabbit care.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

Uk.rec.pets.misc
Covers just about everything to do with pets and pet care.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Visit ***www.angelfire.com/tx/facehugger/list.html*** to discuss exotic pets with other fanatics.

A healthypet.com is a happy pet

GET CHATTING?

www.DogsOnline.com
A selection of canine-related chat rooms (for owners, presumably).

Looking for more Money sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY. PICTURES: BRITSTOCK-IFA

Encyclopaedia Britannica

www.britannica.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

When Britannica first went online, it received so many hits that it instantly crashed. Thankfully for students (and the plain curious) everywhere, the big daddy is back. Britannica can't be beaten for its comprehensive and completely free database. The layout is attractive despite the lack of pictures (there isn't the room), the interface is clear and easy and users also enjoy exhaustive cross-references to other articles, both in Britannica and externally. Whatever your homework query, it's here. Which is, after all, the point.

Brains always chopped out a line before work

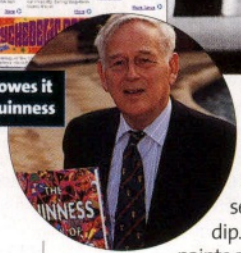
Smarty pants

ENCYCLOPAEDIAS The Web helps you build your brain without books

Encarta Online

encarta.msn.com ★★★

Microsoft's behemoth of a CD is available online with a fair amount of free-of-charge stuff to peruse Sadly, the real multimedia stuff comes at cost – except for certain showpiece subjects, such as space exploration. Never mind, you can always console yourself by voting for your favourite commemorative stamp. There's even the odd external link, should you elect to climb down from Uncle Bill's knee.



Norris: owes it all to Guinness

Encyclopedia.com

www.encyclopedia.com ★★★

How quaint: it looks like a *book*! It's a cute idea, but perhaps that's designed to hide the fact that there are no pictures whatsoever in this encyclopaedia. There are links to sites with pictures for which you have to have credit card at the ready, but your eyes will be drooping unless your search is a brief dip. A picture paints a thousand words? Not here it doesn't.

Funkandwagnalls.com

www.funkandwagnalls.com ★★★★★

Heavyweights like Microsoft and Britannica should keep an eye on the comically-named Funk and Wagnalls, a comprehensive and user-friendly resource which is free. A whacking great encyclopedia is backed up with a dictionary, Reuters news lines and a decent Flash media gallery, with Power Search checking all these at once. Pity the picture captioned 'Flag of England' was of a bridge, though.

Hutchinson Online Encyclopedia

www.bt-ern.co.uk/helicon/ ★★

A limited amount of free access is allowed after a two-minute registration process, but most of the site is off-limits to those who haven't forked out the £50 subscription. The user-friendly search engine earns points, but the articles aren't deep enough (100 words on World War Two?) and secondary links don't work. More of a quick reference guide than an encyclopaedia.

And you thought it was all grey

On your topmarks.co.uk, get set, go...

best learning sites ★★★★★ where can I...

LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE?

www.travlang.com
70 languages, all learnable online.
www.learnplus.com
Spanish and German tuition.

LEARN A USEFUL SKILL?

www.how2hq.com
Tells you how to do almost anything.
educationunlimited.co.uk
Impressive on IT in general.

FIND LEARNING RESOURCES?

www.schoolsnet.com
Portal with lesson and school details.
www.topmarks.co.uk
Help with work on 100s of topics.

LEARN OVERSEAS?

www.eeop.com
Learning for adults in Europe and US.
www.ribi.org/yex/
School exchange programmes.

LEARN WITHOUT SCHOOL?

www-icdl.open.ac.uk
The Open University – enough said.
learning.channel4.com
Resource for home learners aged 4-19.

FIND A NEWS GROUP?

listserv@lists.psu.edu
Everything you can think of for students, teachers and parents.

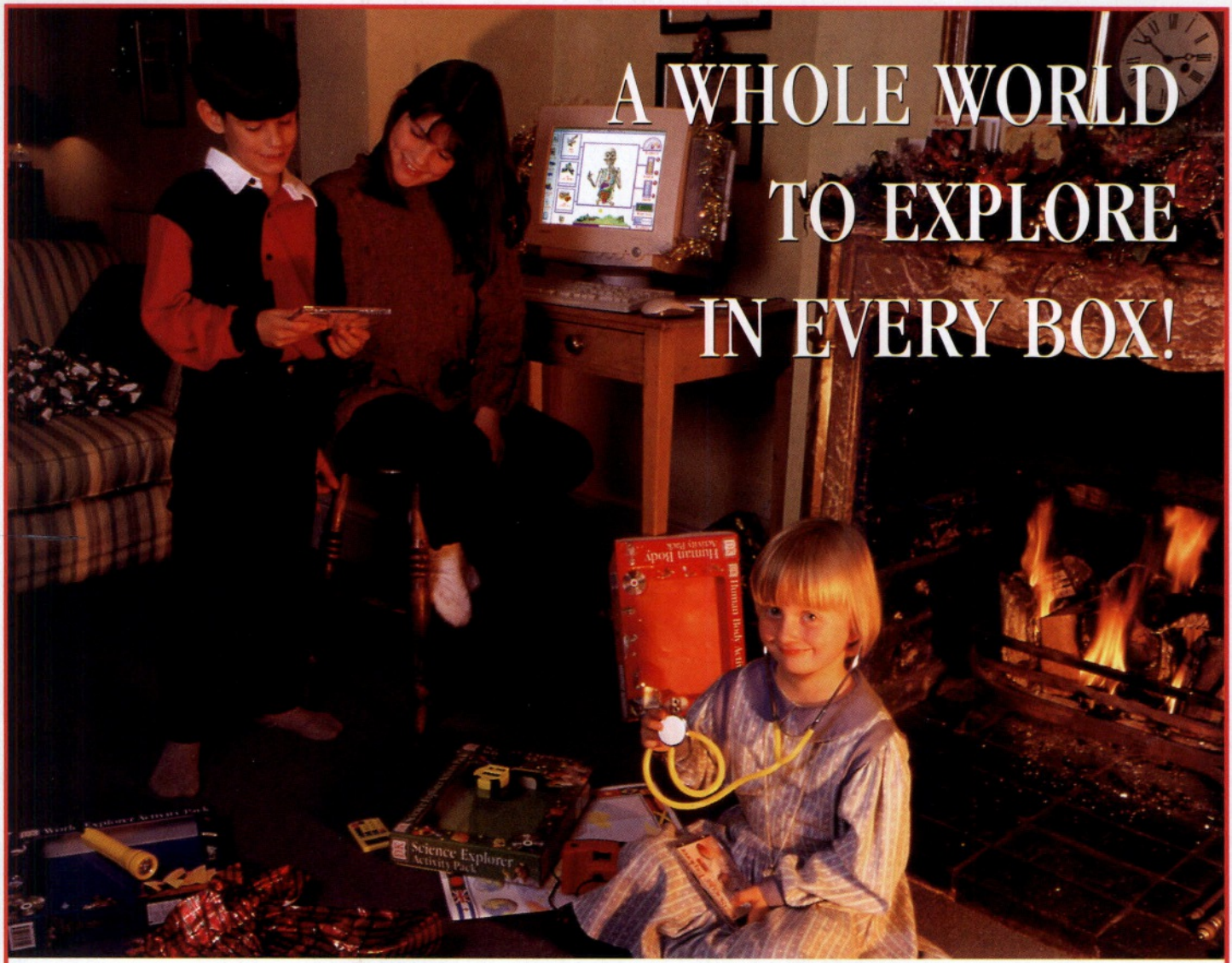
JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Send a message marked 'subscribe ENGLED-L' to ***listserv@lists.psu.edu*** to discuss British education.

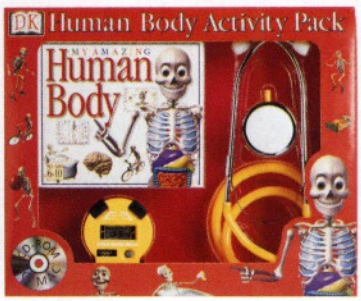
GET CHATTING?

www.eduweb.co.uk
The place to find plenty of resources and chat links for pupils and teachers alike.

WORDS: GARY PARKINSON; PICTURES: UNIVERSAL PICTORIAL PRESS AND AGENCY LIMITED, REX



This Christmas don't just give them one present! Give them a Dorling Kindersley Activity Pack and open up a whole world of interactive fun. Inside every box there's an action-packed CD-ROM plus exciting toys to bring out the explorer in everyone!



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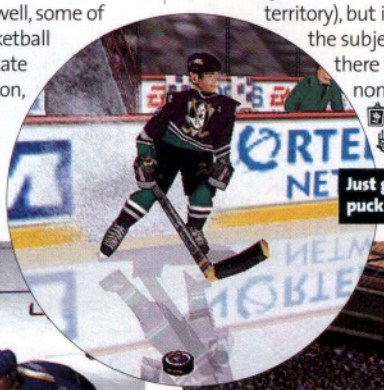
It's not the winning...

SPORT GAMES Even if you're not a honed athlete in real life, perfecting your gaming skills couldn't be easier with these Championship-winning sites

Jump Shot Basketball

www.shotsports.com ★★★

Designed to bring out the Michael Jordan in all of us (well, some of us), Jump Shot Basketball allows you to simulate any basketball season, past, present and future. You can select your team, create and edit your players and even modify real teams to suit your needs. There's no actual gameplay (this is very much Fantasy Football territory), but if you're into the subject matter, there really is none finer.



Just get the puck out of it

Sports Gaming

www.sports-gaming.co.uk ★★★

Arsenal signs Sega...Prince Naseem hits delays... No, you haven't missed the Gunners' latest overseas signing and Naseem didn't get stuck on the M25 on the way to the ring (shame), but such stories are big news in the world of gaming – and this is the site to keep you abreast of them all. It's a European offshoot of a massive American site with stacks of reviews, dealing with every format from PlayStation to PC. There's a searchable reviews database, with back-reviews running over the last two years and it can also link through to US titles.

Vidgames

www.vidgames.com/ps/software/sports.html ★★★★

There's no better reviews than those written by real gamers, and there's plenty of them on this massive US-based database of every PlayStation sports game. Usefully, the site includes cheats and tips, and offers sneak previews on forthcoming games. If you just have to know how to pull off an overhead kick while punching your opponent in the face at the same time, look no further.

Zone Games

www.microsoft.com/games ★★★★

Features a raft of downloadable game samples, largely centred around what our colonial chums call sport. Plenty of baseball, as well as downloadable 'roster' details (for all you retentives out there) and, of course, American football, which as we all know is a silly game played by girls in helmets. You can play games free online at Microsoft's own linked-in games zone (***Zone.com***), including golf and a half-decent flight simulator. As you'd expect, it's slicker than a very slick thing.

The Nuneaton Borough home games lacked realism

Robbie: captured on Fifa 2000

Electronic Arts

www.easports.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Electronic Arts is the doyen of the sports gaming world, with one of the biggest ranges of games software for the PlayStation and PC. This super-slick site features downloadable snapshot demos, a great range of screensavers, hints and tips, and covers sports from American football through to basketball and car racing. That said, any gamer will tell you that EA's king product has to be football (soccer to our American chums), and you just have to check out the fully-animated sequences available on this site, culled from the latest and greatest incarnation of the FIFA series, FIFA 2000. It's jaw-droppingly good, although a little birdie tells us that Konami's next-generation International Superstar Soccer (ISS Pro) offering is even better. Can't wait.

best games sites ★★★★★

where can I...

BUY COMPUTER GAMES?

www.game-retail.co.uk
Ten percent off marked games ordered online here.

www.gamesparadise.com
All the top games discounted.

FIND GAMING NEWS?

www.gamesdomain.co.uk
Great news and game-related features on the ones that matter.

www.ign.com
Thorough worldwide games news.

FIND DEMOS?

www.happypuppy.com
The newest demos and shareware games, with a download database.

www.pczone.co.uk
Comprehensive reviews and demos.

Money off top titles at game-retail.co.uk

FIND HINTS AND CHEATS?

www.gamefaqs.com
A veritable encyclopedia of advice and secrets for your favourite games.

www.xcheater.com
The latest cheats for the newest games make their way here.

PLAY GAMES ONLINE?

www.shockwave.com
Shocked games and cartoons.

www.wireplay.co.uk
Britain's biggest and best online gaming.

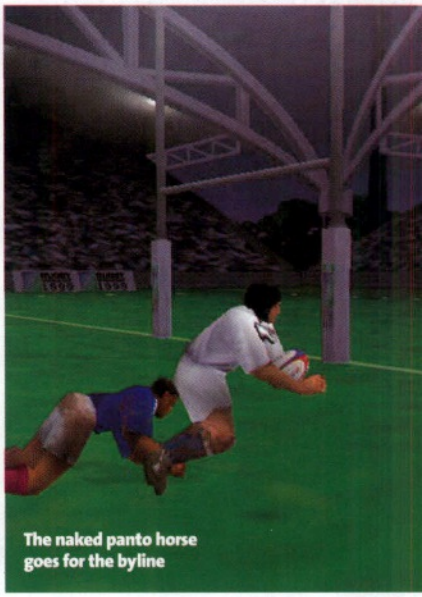
FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.games.playstation
Plenty of sport to discuss here.

GET CHATTING?

www.dreamcaster.net
Probably the most talked-about thing in gaming at the moment. Select 'forums' to talk to other users.

Looking for more Games sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108



The naked panto horse goes for the byline

WORDS: ANDY KERR

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Share and share alike

SHAREWARE Make your PC that little bit better with some handy shareware add-ons – but with so many files out there, where do you start? Try here

All Macintosh

www.allmacintosh.com ★★★★

Who's this for then? This is actually part of the Tucows site, but it's worth mentioning separately for all you Macintosh enthusiasts out there (and we know you're there). As with the main Tucows site, programs are rated, and although this isn't the most comprehensive Mac site around, it has a good range of software, with descriptions. Worth mooing at if you're a Mac (or iMac) user.

Tucows: it's got two cows

Kagi

www.kagi.com ★★★★

Like many good ideas, the beauty of it is its simplicity. The problem many shareware authors face is collecting payments – they are not expecting enough registrations to accept credit cards themselves, and not many people will post cheques. Enter Kagi: the site collects the payments by credit card then passes the cash on to the authors. This site isn't, strictly speaking, a shareware archive – but it's so useful we're including it anyway.

Shareware.com

www.shareware.com ★★★★

This is as easy to use as...a very easy thing. Claiming 'more than 250,000 files', ***shareware.com*** must be one of the most comprehensive shareware archives on the Net. Just enter the operating system you're using and then a word likely to be in the file name, and leave the rest to the site. Shareware.com also belongs to the CNet group of sites, only significant to the punter because you can find handy links to others in the stable (see ***download.com*** below).

SoftwareNow

www.softwarenow.com ★★★

Your mother would approve of this site – it's neat and very well presented. Software is split into categories; however, when we were looking at the site we found several categories that were completely empty. What happened – did they forget about them or are they there for purely decorative purposes? We must be told. Disappointing.

The Shareware Stockpile

www.stockpile.com ★★

Bit of 'all mouth and no trousers', this site. It teases you by whispering seductive, comprehensive

Shoot 'em up, load 'em down

Download.com

www.download.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Like its fellow site-dweller shareware.com, download.com is a CNet site. And in keeping with its flat mate, it has a good range of software and is easily searchable from the front page. A set of links at the top of the page immediately points you to some of the most commonly-requested software categories, such as Web Browsers, and when you are given a list of programs which match your search, you're even told how many times each has been downloaded – so you can tell which are the horribly common ones, darling.

WORDS: IAN WRIGLEY; PICTURES: KOBAL COLLECTION, RETNA, REX

descriptions of the software it carries – then when you're drooling with excitement you discover it doesn't carry enough to make it worth more than a cursory visit. It's almost as if the site is just there as an afterthought to the company's 'real' software shop.

Tucows

ukms.tucows.com ★★★★

Crazy name, crazy site – it's just *so* wacky. Tucows has more than 1,000 'mirror' sites around the world – so you're pretty much guaranteed to be able to connect to one of them. The site rates the shareware and freeware it has available, from zero to five cows (talk about milking an image), and has a description of each program. Although not as many programs available as other sites, its rating system is good.

UK Mirror Service

www.mirror.ac.uk

★★★★

Why be original when you can just copy? This site is devoted to mirroring others from around the world: it contains copies of different software archives, and since it's UK-based you should get a faster connection than by linking up to the US originals.

Free casino games at www.winsite.com

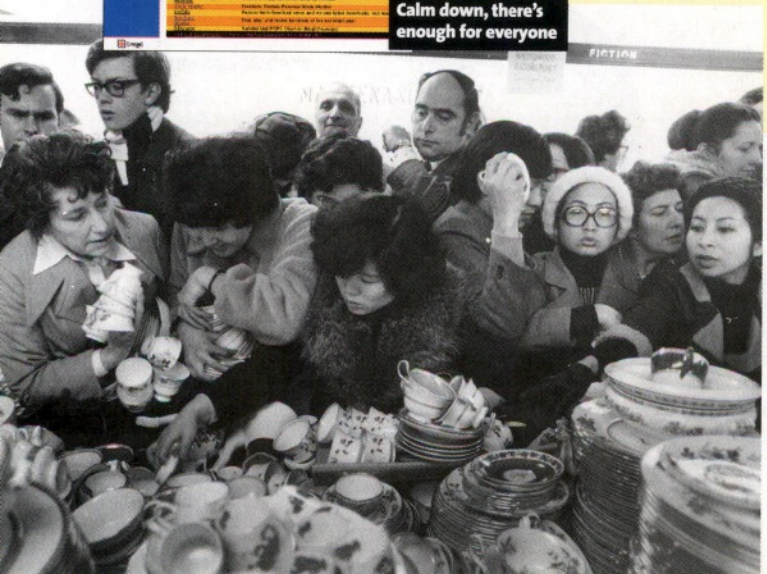
Winfiles.com

www.winfiles.com

★★★★

Is CNet trying to recreate Rome of a few millennia ago? For WinFiles is – yes, you've guessed it – yet another part of the CNet empire. This one is attractively presented, with a nice graphical interface which looks like windows in Windows – presumably to make the novice feel more at home. It also includes things like Windows tips and tricks – so it's a good general Windows site, as well as a source of cheap software. Onward, centurions. Carpe diem and all that.

Calm down, there's enough for everyone



GIVING SOMETHING BACK

Pay up, skinflints

You'll pay in the end

Shareware is 'try before you buy' software – so, if you like it, pay up. The software author has released the program, often with no limitations, in the hope that people who like it will pay the fee and register the package. This is often only $10 or $20, and these days you can normally pay by credit card over the Web. Paying for your shareware means that the author is more likely to keep working on improvements, and sometimes you will get a more advanced version of the software in return for your payment. See *www.softsite.com/shareware.htm* for a full explanation.

best computers sites ★★★★★

where can I...

IMPROVE MY DESKTOP?

hensa.freethemes.com
Just about every popular desktop theme you could ever imagine.
macinsearch.com/users/MacPower/theme.html
Make your Mac as sexy as those ads.
www.iconfactory.com
High quality Mac icons to download.
www.themeworld.com
Some wild and wacky themes from across the Web collected under one roof.

GET COMPUTER NEWS?

www.cnet.com
'The center of the digital universe': everything a Net user could need.
www.zdnet.co.uk
Another computing supersite, but with a specific UK slant. Check out ***www.zdnet.com*** too.
www.microsoft.com
A must for enthusiasts, from the overlords of the Windows world.
www.apple.com
Apple news and products – plus *Star Wars* trailers as a bonus.

GET HELP AND ADVICE?

www.mydesktop.com
Excellent computer news and features, plus brilliant tech support.
www.nowonder.com
Email a technical problem and they'll reply in 24 hours or less.
www.strum.co.uk/webbery/
Advice on creating business Web sites. Still useful for the home user.
www.ask-a-tech.org
'Helping you help yourself'; allows you to submit specific questions.

FIND USER GROUPS?

www.texas.net/~macapple
American-based but very useful user group specifically for Mac users.
www.wugnet.com
The Windows Users Group Network is a resource centre for support.
www.icpug.org.uk
Independent Computer Products Users Group has helped for 20 years.
www.uk-main.com/chic/
The Chic Computer Club offers all the help, news and advice you need.

BUY HARDWARE OR SOFTWARE?

www.cwonline.co.uk
Computer Warehouse is a leading supplier of all Mac-related products.
www.pcworld.co.uk
Offering several different stores for software and even furniture – the hardware site opens soon.
www.software-warehouse.co.uk
Software heaven; everything you need from a wide range of makers.
www.bidnbuy.com
If you don't want to buy from a store, indulge in a computer auction.

GET STUFF FOR MAC USERS?

www.flashpaper.com/umac/
It's called The Ultimate Macintosh: go there and you'll find out why.
www.tidbits.com
Weekly newsletter for Mac users, with tips and the latest news for all those who dare to 'think different'.
www.macfixit.com
Great troubleshooting site for Mac users.
www.webintosh.com
Excellent systems, software and peripherals newsletter.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.comp.shareware
Get the inside track on the best Shareware sites around.

Spice things up at themeworld.com

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Get alerts on the latest shareware by joining at ***www.theshareware.net***

GET CHATTING?

chat.zdnet.com
Technical info without any of the technical language.

Looking for more computer sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

WinSite

www.winsite.com ★★★

Just what you wanted – another Windows shareware site. This one allows you to search by name or just browse the archive. The program descriptions are rather terse, which means that unless you know what you're looking for you might be in for a long hunt. There are several thousand files here, which should keep you busy.

Spending time on the Internet can be good for your health.

Find the best health sites at ukplus.co.uk

www.ukplus.co.uk

The Internet is bursting with great ideas to improve your health and fitness. But ask an ordinary search engine to seek out health and fitness websites and you'll end up with far more than is good for you. So if you want the sites that really do put you on top form, come to UKPlus. We've already done the hard work to make sure the selection you get is leaner and fitter than anything else on the Internet. Sites that cover everything from Tai Chi to herbal tea. Proving once again that UKPlus is definitely the best of the web without the rest of the web.

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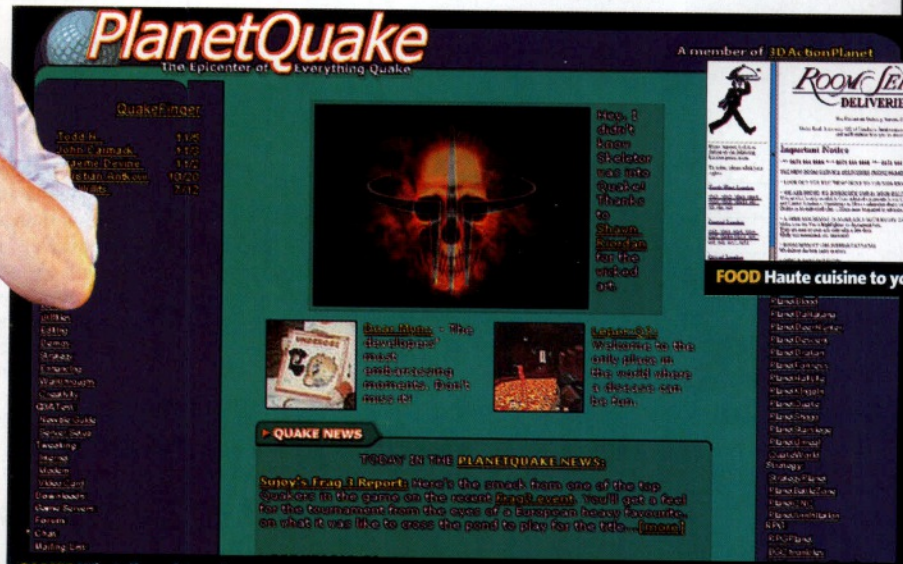

GAMES What d'you fancy: journey to the epicentre of Quake or an interactive adventure with Lord of the Jungle?

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Co-operative Bank ***www.co-operativebank.co.uk***
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First Direct ***www.firstdirect.co.uk***
First-e ***www.first-e.com***
Halifax ***www.halifax.co.uk***
Hamilton Direct ***www.hdb.co.uk***
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NatWest ***www.natwest.co.uk***

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The Baltic Exchange ***www.balticexchange.co.uk***
Brussels ***www.stockexchange.be***
Hong Kong ***www.sehk.com.hk***
London ***www.londonstockex.co.uk***
New York ***www.nyse.com***
Swiss ***www.swx.ch***
Tokyo ***www.tse.or.jp/eindex.html***

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Localads ***www.localads.net***
London's Classifieds ***www.classifieds-free.net***
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netTRADER ***www.nettrader.co.uk***
PhotoAds ***www.photoads.co.uk***
Photographic Ads ***www.nitehawk.com/iga/ads.html***
UK Personals ***www.uk-personals.net***
Web Personals ***www.webpersonals.com***

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Freeware ***www.freewarehome.com***
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MP3 ***www.mp3.com***
Real Player ***www.real.com***
Shareware ***www.download.com***
ZDNet ***www.hotfiles.com***

FOOD AND DRINK

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Restaurants.co.uk ***www.restaurants.co.uk***
Room Service ***www.roomservice.co.uk***
Wine Spectator ***www.winespectator.com***

GAMES

GUIDES AND COMPANIES

Dreamcast ***www.dreamcast.com***
Future Games Network ***www.fgnetwork.com***
GameCenter ***www.gamecenter.com***
Game Daily ***www.gamedaily.com***
GameSpot ***www.gamespot.com***
GameSpyder ***www.gamespyder.com***
GameStats ***www.gamestats.com***
GA Source ***www.ga-source.com***
MacGaming ***www.maccentral.com/games***
MultiPlayer ***www.multiplayer.com***
Nintendo ***www.nintendo.com***
Planet Quake ***www.planetquake.com***
Playstation ***www.playstation.com***
Quake Series ***www.idosoftware.com***
Sega ***www.sega-europe.com***
Total Video Games ***www.totalvideogames.com***
Yahoo! ***games.yahoo.com***
Zone ***www.zone.com***

GENEALOGY

British Ancestral Research ***www.brit-a-r.demon.co.uk***
British Heraldic Institute ***www.kwtelecom.com/heraldry***
Family Search ***www.familysearch.com***
Genealogy for All ***www.excaliburknights.com/genealogy/***
Genealogy Research Source ***www.genealogy.bookpub.net***
Public Record Office ***www.pro.gov.uk***
Rootsweb ***www.rootsweb.com***

GOVERNMENT

BRITAIN

10 Downing Street ***www.number-10.gov.uk***
Arts Council ***www.artscouncil.org.uk***
Department for Culture, Media and Sport ***www.culture.gov.uk***
Department for International Development ***www.dfid.gov.uk***
Department of Health ***www.doh.gov.uk***
Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions ***www.detr.gov.uk***
MAFF – Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food ***www.maff.gov.uk***
Ministry of Defence ***www.mod.uk***
Scottish Parliament ***www.scotland.gov.uk***
Welsh Assembly ***www.wales.gov.uk***

THE WORLD

Australia ***www.fed.gov.au***
China ***www.gov.cn***
European Commission ***europa.eu.int***
France ***www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr***
Germany ***www.bundesregierung.de***
Russia ***www.gov.ru***
United Nations ***www.un.org***
United States ***www.whitehouse.gov***

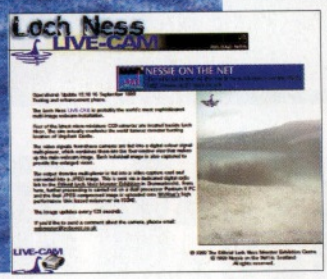
Coming to a swimming pool near you

Nessie On The Net

www.lochness.co.uk ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Although we saw nothing in our 10 minutes online, we were transfixed by the live Webcam overlooking the loch, making this the top Nessie site. Update yourself on all the recent Nessie sightings (there were three last year) – and find out more about Nessie's near miss with Mad Cow disease (it's a long story). Also meet Morag of Loch Morar and Lizzie of Loch Lochy, who might sound like long-running cast members from *Take the High Road* but are, in fact, fellow creatures who dwell in the Scottish 'monster triangle'. For another Nessie Webcam, see *www.lochness.scotland.net*.



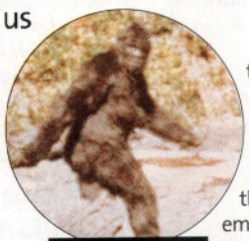
'Anyone got a camera?'

MYTHICAL MONSTERS Are they real or hoaxes? Well, if you believe what you read online, legendary beasts are all around us

Bigfoot Research Organisation

www.moneymaker.org/BFRR/ ★★★

Want to become a sasquatch/Bigfoot investigator but still keep your day job? A bit difficult if you work in Guildford, but this site tells you everything you need to know and how to volunteer for research. This is the most 'scientifically credible' Bigfoot organisation, and it offers handy hints on what to do if you meet BF: 'Hair is best collected immediately and put in a ZipLoc baggie and tissue or blood should be deep frozen'. Now, you don't get those tips from *Bella*, do you? Also check out *www.serve.com/shadows/bf.htm*



Lord Lucan's facial hair took over

The British Big Cat Mystery

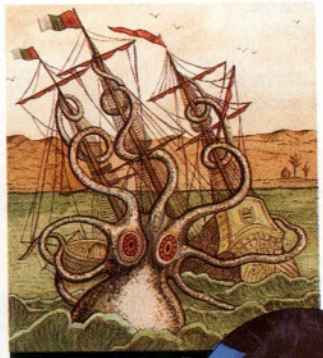
www.bigwig.net/bigcat ★★★★

It's your duty to let THEM (that's the Government) know that we know the ABCs (that's the Big Cats) are out there, says this site. Confused? The people behind this site reckon the Government is employing hush hush tactics when it comes to big cats because it doesn't know how to deal with them – as if... If you're a believer, this is the place to be. It features links to other like-minded sites, including Essex Panther Watch (*www.essexpanther.tsx.org*) where presumably the cats are easy to spot because of their white paws.

The Far Shores Crypto Corner

www.farshore.force9.co.uk/crypt.htm ★★★

What is the most cunning of all animals? That which no man has seen. Can't argue with that, and this poser forms the opener to Crypto Corner, which records just about every mysterious beast sighting.



Ships with yer calamari? Right: the ABC of cats

Read about the Cheltenham Panther (no doubt beautifully mannered) and, strangest of all, the Wisconsin Burger King emu. Do you want fries with that?

Project Paranormal

www.xproject-paranormal.com/CryptoZoo/hominids/sknkape.html ★★★

Decent yeti sites are as hard to come by as the big guy himself so we broadened our search to hairy hominids in general. As the Project X site proves, variations on the yeti theme abound: China has its Yeren, Africa has Pongo, Mongolia has an Alma and Australia has a Yowie (presumably as well as a Rolf).

best weird sites ★★★★★ where can I...

FIND WEIRD NEWS?

www.joeha.com/whiteboard/

A collection of those silly little stories to email your mates.

www.tabloid.net

National Enquirer-style paper, which mixes truth and fiction.

LEARN ABOUT ALIENS?

www.seti-inst.edu

The world's top ET-hunters track down the little green men.

www.conspire.com

UFO files, plus conspiracy theories and other madness.

SEE SOME WACKY WEBCAMS?

www.teleport.com/~voudoun/webcam.shtml

Yes, it's a shadow. And that's about it.

www.flyvision.org/sitelite/Houston/GhostWatcher

Webcams from some people who believe they might have ghosts.

SCARE MYSELF STUPID?

www.deathclock.com

Type in your date of birth, then let the clock count down to your predicted death. Nice.

Don't get Y2K'd – go to nodoom.com

www.scary.com

Frightening stories to shut the kids up once and for all.

FIND SOME MILLENNIAL MADNESS?

www.nodoom.com

Stock up on those supplies for your bunker – while you still can.

www.mille.org

A full breakdown on Y2k madness.

JOIN A NEWSGROUP?

alt.paranet.paranormal

A cornucopia of strange creatures.

FIND A MAILING LIST?

If it's Generally Weird, it's at ***www.integral.org/mailman/listinfo/generallyweird***

GET CHATTING?

www.y2knews.com/chat.htm

Get building that bunker now...

WORDS: SUE WEEKES; PICTURES: FORTEAN PICTURE LIBRARY

the new Millennium

to bistros, it's all here. Let's just hope the Internet's still working come the New Year...

HEALTH

DIETING

Fitness Online
www.fitnessonline.com
Light Living ***www.lightliving.com***
Three Fat Chicks
www.3fatchicks.com
WeightWatchers
uk.weightwatchers.com

DOCTORS & DIAGNOSIS

Ask Dr Weil
cgi.pathfinder.com/drweil/
Ask The Doc ***www.ask-the-doc.com***
British Medical Journal
www.bmj.com
Healthy Ideas
www.healthyideas.com
Intelihealth ***www.intelihealth.com***
Mayo Clinic ***www.mayo.edu***
MedRef ***www.medscout.com***
Mental Health
www.mentalhealth.com
Patient ***www.patient.co.uk***

SUPPORT & INFORMATION

Alcoholics Anonymous
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org
Alzheimer's Disease Society
www.alzheimers.org.uk
Cancer Bacup
www.cancerbacup.org.uk
Centre For Online Addiction
netaddiction.com
Diabetes UK ***www.diabetic.org.uk***
Don't Smoke
www.dontsmoke.com
HIV/AIDS Information & Links
www.brad.ac.uk/staff/ijhodgson/hivlinks.htm
National Autistic Society
www.oneworld.org/autism_uk
National Meningitis Trust
www.meningitis-trust.org.uk

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ESTATE AGENTS

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www.cluttons.com
Egerton ***www.egertonproperty.co.uk***
Friend & Falcke
www.friendandfalcke.co.uk
General Accident
www.gaproperty.co.uk
Goldschmidt Howland
www.goldschmidt-howland.co.uk
Hamptons ***www.hamptons.co.uk***
John D Wood ***www.johndwood.co.uk***
Knight Frank ***www.knightfrank.co.uk***
Strutt & Parker
www.struttandparker.co.uk
Winkworth ***www.winkworth.co.uk***

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www.accommodation.com
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HomeDirectory
www.homedirectory.com
Homefile UK ***www.homefileuk.co.uk***
Homepages ***www.homepages.co.uk***
Home to Home
www.home-to-home.co.uk
Home Sale ***www.home-sale.co.uk***
HouseNet ***www.housenet.co.uk***
Internet Property Finder
www.propertyfinder.co.uk
Property Sight
www.property-sight.co.uk
UK Property Gold ***www.ukpg.co.uk***

HUMOUR

Cyber Comedian
webtamers.com/comedian.html
Comedy Zone
www.comedy-zone.co.uk
Funny ***www.funny.co.uk***
JokeDepot ***www.jokedepot.com***
JokePost ***www.jokepost.com***
The Simpsons
www.foxworld.com/simpsons
South Park ***www.comedycentral.com***
Uproar ***www.uproar.com***
Useless Pages
www.go2net.com/internet/useless

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Reed ***www.reed.co.uk***

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www.expatnetwork.co.uk
Golden Square
www.goldensquare.co.uk
Gradunet ***www.gradunet.co.uk***
Guardian ***www.jobsunlimited.co.uk***
Jobsearch UK ***www.jobsearch.co.uk***
Jobsite ***www.jobsite.co.uk***
MonsterBoard ***www.monster.co.uk***
Overseas Jobs ***www.overseasjobs.com***
Personnelnet ***www.personnelnet.com***
Total Jobs ***www.totaljobs.com***
WorkWeb ***www.workweb.co.uk***
Yelcom ***www.yelcom.com***

KIDS

0-8

Bedtime stories
www.home-office-mall.com/bedtime-story
Disney Channel
www.disneychannel.co.uk
FunSchool ***www.funschool.com***
Kidscom ***www.kidscom.com/orakc/Mousers/mouse.html***
Nickelodeon ***www.nickjr.com***
Sesame Street
www.sesamestreet.com/preschool

8 PLUS

AJ Kids ***www.ajkids.com***
BBC Schools Online
www.bbc.co.uk/education/schools
Club-Z ***www.club-z.com***
EduWeb ***www.eduweb.co.uk***
Family Education
www.familyeducation.com
BJ Pinchbeck Homework Helper
www.bjpinchbeck.com
Tarzan
disney.go.com/worldsofdisney/tarzan
Teen Advice ***www.teenadvice.net***
Thunk ***www.thunk.com***
Yahooligans ***www.yahooligans.com***

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ONLINE MAGS

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Carseekers ***www.carseekers.co.uk***
Carsource ***www.carsource.co.uk***
Exchange and Mart ***www.exchangeandmart.co.uk***
New Car Net ***www.new-car-net.co.uk***
Totalise Car Save ***www.totalise.net/carsave/index.htm***
Virtual Showroom ***www.virtualshowroom.co.uk***
What Car? Online ***www.whatcar.co.uk***

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Audi ***www.audi.co.uk***
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Ford ***www.ford.co.uk***
Honda ***www.honda.co.uk***
Jaguar ***www.jaguarcars.com***
Lotus ***www.lotuscars.co.uk***
Mazda ***www.mazda.co.uk***
Mercedes-Benz ***www.mercedes-benz.co.uk***
Mitsubishi ***www.mitsubishi-cars.co.uk***
Nissan ***www.nissan-europe.com***
Peugeot ***www.peugeot.co.uk***
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Rover ***www.rover.co.uk***
Toyota ***www.toyota.co.uk***
Vauxhall ***www.vauxhall.co.uk***
Volkswagen ***www.volkswagen.co.uk***
Volvo ***www.volvocars.volvo.co.uk***

MUSIC
TOP ARTISTS
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The Beatles ***members.tripod.com/~taz4158/pepper.html***
Blur ***www.blur.co.uk***
David Bowie ***www.davidbowie.com***
Boyzone ***www.boyzone.co.uk***
Catatonia ***www.catatonia.com***
Garbage ***www.garbage.com***
Macy Gray ***www.macygray.com***
Natalie Imbruglia ***www.imbruglia.com***
Jamiroquai ***www.jamiroquai.co.uk***
Manic Street Preachers ***www.manics.co.uk***
Melanie C ***www.northern-star.co.uk***
George Michael ***www.aegean.net***
Oasis ***www.oasisinet.com***
Prince ***www.love4oneanother.com***
Radiohead ***www.radiohead.co.uk***
REM ***www.remhq.com***
Stereophonics ***www.stereophonics.co.uk***
Supergrass ***www.supergrass.com***
Travis ***www.travisonline.com***
Robbie Williams ***www.robbiewilliams.co.uk***

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES
Imperial War Museum ***www.iwm.org.uk***
London Transport Museum ***www.ltmuseum.co.uk***
National Gallery ***www.nationalgallery.org.uk***
Natural History Museum ***www.nhm.ac.uk***
Tate Gallery ***www.tate.org.uk***

NEWS
NEWSPAPERS
Daily Record ***www.record-mail.co.uk***
Financial Times ***www.ft.com***
Guardian ***www.guardian.co.uk***
Independent ***www.independent.co.uk***
The Mirror ***www.mirror.co.uk***
Daily Star ***www.megastar.co.uk***
The Sun ***www.currantbun.com***
Sunday People ***www.people.co.uk***
The Telegraph ***www.telegraph.co.uk***
The Times ***www.the-times.co.uk***

NEWS SERVICES
CNN ***www.cnn.com***
ITN ***www.itn.co.uk***
NewsNow ***www.newsnow.co.uk***
News Unlimited ***www.newsunlimited.co.uk***
PA News ***www.pa.press.net***
Reuters ***www.reuters.com/news***

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EmailFinder ***www.emailfinder.com***
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WhoWhere ***www.whowhere.com***
Yahoo ***people.yahoo.com***

PHONE NUMBERS
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Thomson Directories ***www.infospace.com/uk.thomw/***
Yellow Pages ***www.yell.co.uk***

RADIO
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On The Air ***www.ontheair.com***
Radio Directory ***www.radiodirectory.com***
Radio On The Internet ***www.radio-on-the-internet.com***
Real Guide ***realguide.real.com***

SCIENCE
IQ TESTS
Brain.com ***www.brain.com/test.htm***
IQ Test.com ***www.iqtest.com***
Mensa Workout ***www.mensa.org/workout.html***

NEWS AND UPDATES
BBC Science ***news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/sci/tech/default.htm***
Eureka Alert ***www.eurekalert.org***
NASA ***science.nasa.gov***
New Scientist ***www.newscientist.com***
WhyFiles ***whyfiles.news.wisc.edu/***

SEARCH ENGINES
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Shopping UK ***www.internetics.co.uk/shop/***
Shops On The Net ***www.sotn.com***
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UK Max ***www.ukmax.co.uk/shopping***
UK Shopping Zone ***ukshoppingzone.co.uk***

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Tesco ***www.tesco.co.uk***

TRAVEL Whatever you do, for God's sake don't order beef

SPORT Sophie missed the photographer just in time

TV Lost: the plot

TELEVISION friends.warnerbros.com

SPORT

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Coventry City ***www.ccfc.co.uk***
Derby County ***www.dcfc.co.uk***
Everton ***www.evertonfc.com***
Leeds United ***www.lufc.co.uk***
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Liverpool ***anfield.merseyworld.com***
Manchester United ***www.manutd.com***
Middlesborough ***www.mfc.co.uk***
Newcastle United ***www.newcastle-utd.co.uk/nufc/***
Sheffield Wednesday ***www.swfc.co.uk***
Southampton ***www.saintsfc.co.uk/index.htm***
Sunderland ***www.sunderland-afc.com***
Tottenham Hotspur ***www.spurs.co.uk***
Watford ***www.watfordfc.com***
West Ham Utd ***www.whufc.co.uk***
Wimbledon ***www.wimbledon-fc.co.uk***

SPORT A-Z

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Fishing ***www.fishing.org***
Football ***www.footballnews.co.uk***
Golf ***Golf.com***
Hockey ***www.fieldhockey.com***
Martial Arts ***www.martial-arts-network.com***
Motorsport ***www.autosport.com***
Racing ***www.sporting-life.com***
Rugby League ***www.rleague.com***
Rugby Union ***www.rugby365.co.uk***
Skiing ***www.complete-skier.com***
Tennis ***www.tenniscountry.com***

TELEVISION

TOP SHOWS

Big Breakfast ***bigbreakfast.channel4.com***
Brookside ***www.brookie.com***
Coronation Street ***www.coronationstreet.co.uk***
Eastenders ***www.bbc.co.uk/eastenders***
Friends ***friends.warnerbros.com***
Hollyoaks ***www.hollyoaks.com***
Jerry Springer ***www.universalstudios.com/tv/jerryspringer/***
Neighbours ***www.neighbours.com***
Teletubbies ***www.bbc.co.uk/education/teletubbies/tubbies.html***
X-Files ***www.thex-files.com***

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Lufthansa ***www.lufthansa.com***
NorthWest Airlines ***www.nwa.com***
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United Airlines ***www.ual.com***
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DESTINATION GUIDES

Australia ***australia-online.com***
Caribbean ***www.caribbean-travel.com***
France ***www.franceway.com***
Germany ***www.germany-tourism.de***
Greece ***www.areianet.gr/infoxenios***
India ***www.indiagov.org***
Ireland ***www.shamrock.org***
Italy ***www.travel.it***
Japan ***www.jnto.go.jp***
Portugal ***www.portugal-web.com***
Ski Club Of Great Britain ***www.skiclub.co.uk***
Spain ***www.spaintour.com***
UK ***www.visitbritain.com***
US ***www.go-unitedstates.com***

FERRIES

Ferry Savers ***www.ferrysavers.co.uk***
P&O ***www.poef.com/poef/index.htm***
Travel Britain ***www.travelbritain.com/UKPassengerFerries.html***
Travel.World ***www.travel.world.co.uk/ferries.htm***

RAIL TRAVEL

Euro Railways ***www.eurorailways.com***
Great Eastern Railway ***www.ger.co.uk***
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Railtrack ***www.railtrack.co.uk***
Scotrail ***www.scotrail.co.uk***
UK Public Transport Information ***www.pti.org.uk***
Virgin Trains ***www.virgintrains.co.uk***

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WebCam World ***www.webcamworld.com***
Webviews ***www.webviews.co.uk***

FAVOURITES

AfriCam ***www.africam.com***
Dealey Plaza Cam ***www.earthcam.com/jfk***
The Dolls' House ***www.bravo.co.uk/dolls***
Interactive Model Railroad ***rr-vs.informatik.uni-ulm.de***
Jennicam ***www.jennicam.org***
Peeling Paint Cam ***www.mich.com/~rreibel/paintcam.htm***
Ultimate Taxi ***www.ultimatetaxi.com***

WEB CENSORS

Cybersnoop ***www.pearlsw.com***
Cyber Patrol ***www.cyberpatrol.com***
Net Nanny ***www.netnanny.com***
Xcheck ***www.xcheck.net***

WEB DIRECTORIES

About.com ***www.about.com***
4anything ***www.4anything.com***
AOL Netfind ***www.aol.com/netfind***
Excite ***www.excite.com***
Infoseek ***infoseek.go.com***
Liszt (Mailing lists) ***www.liszt.com***
LookSmart ***www.looksmart.com***
Open Directory ***www.dmoz.org***
UK Plus ***www.ukplus.co.uk***
WebCrawler ***www.webcrawler.com***
Yahoo! ***www.yahoo.com***
Yell ***www.yell.co.uk***

Y2K

Action 2000 ***www.bug2000.co.uk***
Y2K.com ***www.y2k.com***
Y2K Culture ***www.y2kculture.com***
Y2K Kitchen ***www.y2kkitchen.com***

DON'T JUST E-MAIL, SEE MAIL

ACTUAL SIZE

'Simulated Screen Image'. Windows 98® and Windows® are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. Smart Media™ is a trademark of Toshiba Corporation.

A world first, the Sharp digital VN-EZ1 Internet ViewCam sends moving pictures over the net in a totally new format.

No complicated procedures, no massive files that take forever to transmit and download.

Using the revolutionary MPEG-4, a new moving picture compression standard, all file sizes are drastically reduced.

LEISURE USE

Making it easy to attach video to all your e-mails, whether they are for family or business usage.

BUSINESS USE

They can easily be viewed, too, by using the Windows® Media Viewer in Windows 98® and Internet Explorer 5.

Open your eyes now to the more exciting possibilities in e-mail, with Sharp.

For more information, including nearest stockist, ring Freefone 0800-262958. Visit our corporate website at www.Sharp-world.com

Use Sharp Internet ViewCam to shoot up to 60 mins of video plus audio on to 32MB Smart Media™ card

Slot neat little Smart Media™ Memory card into the supplied floppy disc adaptor

PixLab software included to help prepare your moving picture files

Send video as e-mail attachment, MPEG-4 drastically reducing file size

Video can be quickly and easily viewed on Windows® Media Player

WIDE SCREEN TV

LCD VIDEO PROJECTOR

DVD

VCR

VIEWCAM

PERSONAL MINIDISC

MINIDISC SYSTEM

SHARP digital

YOU CAN GET LOADS OF STUFF ON TO A SINGLE DVD. WE'VE JUST SQUEEZED ALL THIS OUT OF IT.

EVERY PLAYER ON TEST
27 DVD Video players slug it out, with prices starting at just £280

MIGHTY MUSIC
Why DVD Audio will blow CDs away

OUR TOP 100 DVD MOVIES
Plus the A-Z of every DVD available

JAMMIN' IN A TRAFFIC JAM
Clever car systems that do movies, music and even read the map!

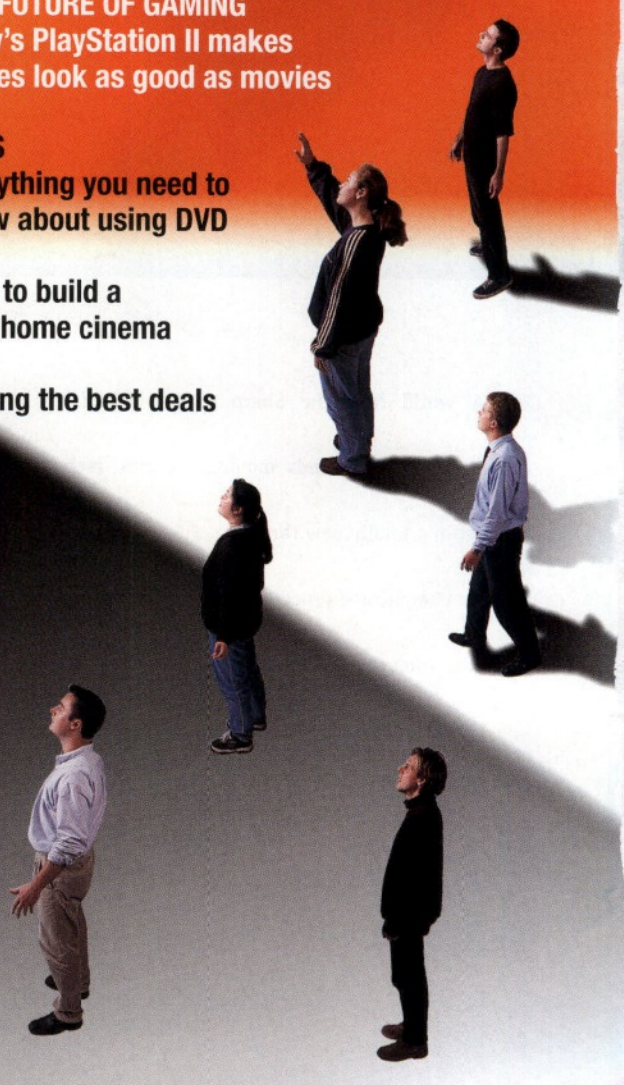
ENGAGE DVD DRIVE!
Turbocharge your PC with a DVD-ROM

THE FUTURE OF GAMING
Sony's PlayStation II makes games look as good as movies

PLUS
Everything you need to know about using DVD

How to build a DVD home cinema

Getting the best deals



FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF

WHAT HI-FI?

DVD THE GUIDE

IT'S HUGE.

OUT NOW FOR £3.95. BUY IT TODAY – BEFORE IT SWALLOWS THE UNIVERSE.

powered by

free serve

MAGAZINE

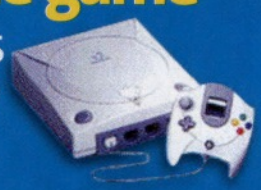
www.freeserve.net

HOW TO GET YOUR ON-LINE PRESENTS

...and avoid the High Street hassle

Going, going, on-line: auctions site opens

All in the game
Christmas computer crackers



Write off
E-mail Santa a Christmas wishlist

Number One
Free web access, site space and e-mails from the biggest ISP

16 pages that will change the way you use the Net

The Net's numb

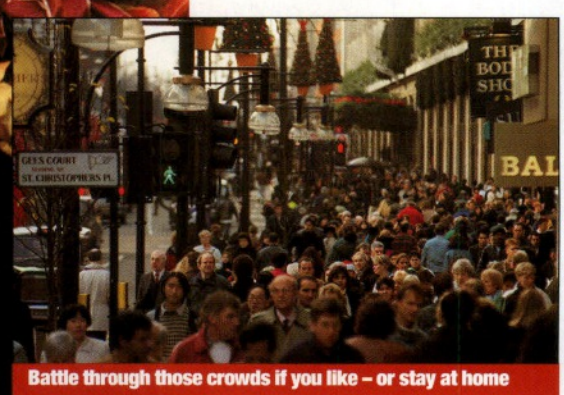
This is Freeserve, the nation's number one Internet service provider. With 1.4 million customers already signed up and more members joining all the time, Freeserve is the UK's No 1 for the Internet.

So what can Freeserve do for you? The next 15 pages might revolutionise the way you use the Net. There's a big feature on shopping – something you can't avoid during the Christmas run-up, so why not make it easy on yourself and leave the High Street for the information superhighway? You'll see the best sites for shopping, whatever you need to buy for the demanding relatives, and you're likely to pick up a bargain along the way.

There's also information on the new Freeserve auction channel, fsauctions, detailing how you can hunt for that treasured item or sell your unwanted stuff for big money.

You'll also learn the benefits of Freeserve membership. Freeserve gives you unlimited e-mail addresses at no cost. You get a huge wodge of cyberspace to build your own website, free of charge. And you get as much access as you want to the Web, at not a penny more than the cost of the local calls. In fact, Freeserve can even get you money off those...

Touched by your presents: see the eyes of your loved ones light up



Battle through those crowds if you like – or stay at home

E-mail

Co-ordinate your chums

Hit the mail on the head

Whatever you want to use the Internet for, one of the key reasons many people go online is for the e-mail. It's a wonderful world of instantaneous mass communication, whether it's dropping a line at lunch to your loved one or organising an evening by mailing several friends at once. E-mails can be as long or short as you want, as there are none of the social pressures of writing letters or postcards – if you don't want to put Yours Sincerely, then don't. It's a young medium and it's growing all the time.

And now you can join in the e-mail revolution for free because when you sign up with Freeserve you receive unlimited e-mail addresses. You can choose your own domain name, and have as many different addresses as you like.

It's all explained on the free start-up CD, which helps you through step-by-step and installs the renowned Microsoft Outlook e-mail package free of charge. You'll soon be an active member of the e generation!

er one

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www.freeserve.net

That's your lot
Freeserve's auctions site is up and running, so you can start searching for bargains now...
page xii

Our Site

Essential guide

The Internet is a massive place and it's growing all the time. It's a superb tool for education, information and entertainment, but it can be overwhelming at first. Luckily for members, Freeserve's homepage at www.freeserve.net is a window on the Web. The best of the Net is on there, with access to an enormous range of information. There's all the up-to-the-minute news you'd expect from a cutting-edge medium like the Internet, complete with business, sport and weather updates. There's plenty of entertainment too on Freeserve's many channels, including the new iCircle women's service, sport, travel and food. And with Christmas coming fast, take the opportunity to shop on-line with Freeserve's shopping channels, featuring several major High Street partners, and the new auction site. It could be everything you ever need!

Your Site

Homing in on the Net

There are 80 million Web sites on the Internet, and they can't all belong to companies or be set up by computer boffins. More and more ordinary people are learning how to build their own little space on the Web. And so can you.
Among everything else that you get for free with Freeserve, one of the most impressive is the free space you get on the Web – 15 megabytes of it, held on our central computers so you don't have to worry about overloading your machine. That's easily big enough to create whatever you want – to build a place of your own. It might seem daunting to build your own website but it's really quite easy – and as ever, Freeserve is on hand to help you out. Just follow the instructions (in plain English) on the Freeserve website and soon you'll be creating your own little space on the World Wide Web for anyone on the planet to look at. It's fun to put your family photos and hobbies on there, but imagine what such an audience could do for your business. Customers worldwide will find your site via search engines, and who knows how valuable that extra traffic could be? So Freeserve will not just save you money, it could even make you money too...

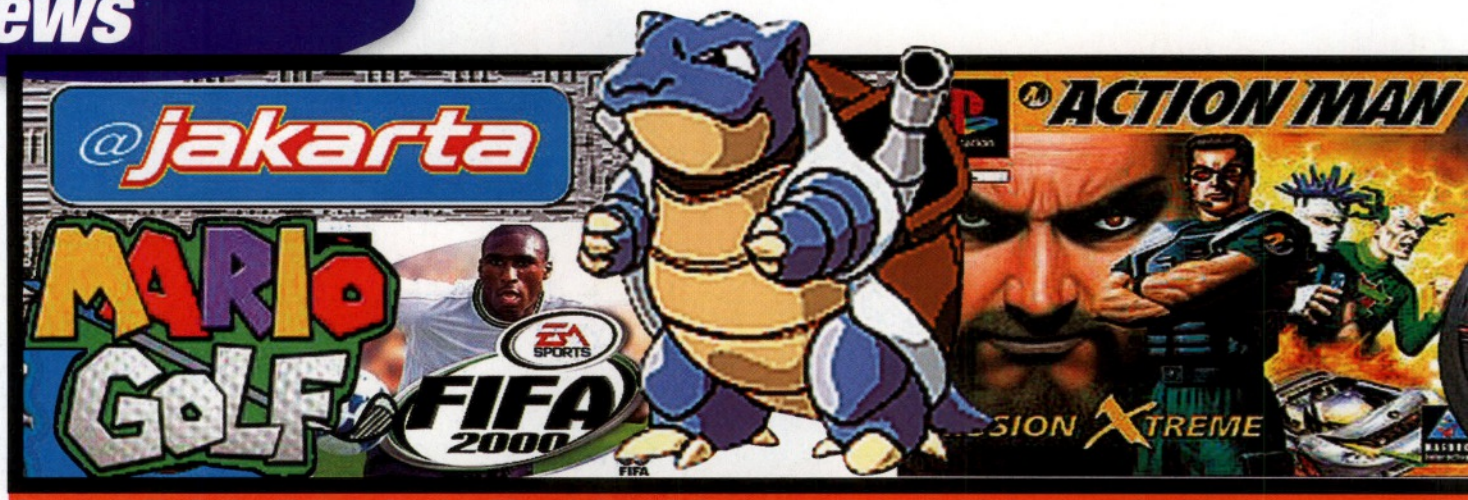
All for nothing

And what's more... it's all completely Free

Freeserve gives you the Net on a plate, and it's all completely free. Hence the name Freeserve. And there's no catch – you pay nothing for unlimited free e-mails, not a penny for the 15 megabytes of free space on the Web, zero pence for the Net access and nothing at all for the huge variety of channels provided on Freeserve's portal.
In fact, the only price you pay is for the local phone call (no matter where you live and where you're calling) – and there's even a way to get around that now. With the Freeserve Time offer you can get up to ten hours of totally free Internet time per month by dialling 162 before making national and international telephone calls. For example, if you spend £3 on calls via 162, you'll get three hours' free Net time, and so on up to ten hours. It'll even save you money on those long-distance calls, too. See www.freeserve.net/time for details.
So where do you start? All you need to do to get connected is to pick up the start-up CD (yet another freebie) from any branch of Dixons, Currys, PC World, The Link or @jakarta – or, if you're already on-line, go to www.freeserve.net to sign up. Soon you'll be surfing the Freeserve channels, and if you're in the mood for saving even more money, try the on-line shopping services for stress-free purchasing, often at prices lower than the crowded High Street.
For further details check this month's special shopping feature, which starts on page viii.
After all, you've got to spend the money you've saved on something!

"You can get free Net time"

Telegraph Colour Library, PA, Steve Orinno



Dreamcast, PlayStation, Nintendo, Gameboy, PC... whatever platform you use there's no debating the quality of the games

Fun and games for Chr

Freeserve's games channel leads to the latest computer releases from @jakarta

Time was when Christmas games included charades and pass-the-parcel. Thankfully, the games being unwrapped this yuletide will be of the computer type.

Computer games have come a long way since Jet Set Willy on the Spectrum, and the recent launch of Sega's excellent 128-bit console Dreamcast – with its Internet connection, hugely expanded memory and all – has heated up the competition more than ever. Games are becoming ever more realistic, and the person who gets a game as a Christmas gift won't be disappointed, whether it's for the Dreamcast, Sony PlayStation, ever-popular Nintendo, hand-held Gameboy or the multi-tasking family PC.

Luckily, Freeserve's new games channel provides instant one-click access to leading High Street specialist @jakarta's on-line domain. @jakarta's site was recently launched as a fully transactional cyber-sister to the High Street stores, and continues the company's ethos of providing informational content in addition to the best games around.

You can benefit from @jakarta's enthusiasm for the burgeoning e-commerce scene. Prices in the website store are designed to beat everyday High Street prices, with special offers carving up to 50% off the retail price.

So you get quality at a discount, but you also get quantity with a huge range of more than 1,200 products, ranging from children's games to educational and office software besides the very latest in educational software.

For the very latest releases you can't wait to get your hands on, you can enjoy @jakarta's hassle-free pre-ordering service. Just jot down your name on-line and the latest craze will be sent to you on the day of its release. An on-screen icon gives you a real-time representation of what is available and how long it will be until you get your hands on the new release.

"With over 1.5 million members, Free

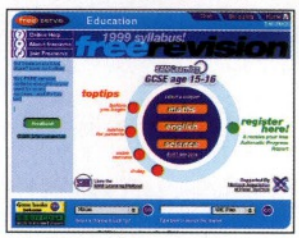
NEW ON FREESERVE

Check out some of our great new features

Stress or success

It's hard enough for any of us to come back down to earth after Christmas, but for those who are sitting GCSEs next summer, the mock exams in January are a terrible wake-up call. Help is at hand with Freeserve's revision helper, which uses the NAHT-supported SAM learning technique to point out what you need to learn. You'll pass with flying colours!

www.freeserve.net/education



It's on the cards

We've all done it – scrabbled around for a pen and a scrap of paper when trying to exchange numbers with someone. Now you can design your own cards on-line and have them delivered to your door within days. Try getting them printed to go along with new mobile phones and pagers bought for Christmas. Quick, grab a pen and write this URL down...

www.freeserve.net/shopping/retailers/cardcorp.htm

Get away!

For some people, the impending Millennium is the ideal excuse to go travelling. Whether it's to avoid all the hype, visit relatives or just get away with someone special to somewhere pleasant, a Millennium minority will be hitting the road. And because they're a minority, the prices are tumbling – Freeserve's partner bargainholidays.com is offering up to £350 off Millennium getaways. Maybe it's time to consider a New Year in New York...

www.freeserve.net/travel

Neil's Groomed for success

Freeserve's Fantasy League game continues apace, and Neil Mitchell is the man leading the way. His Grooming the Wookie team clocked up 88 points during October, winning him the Manager of the Month title and earning him a not inconsiderable £700 bonus. That's just part of the £65,000 total prize money on offer, to entrants to the main competition and for those hazarding a guess at the leading scorers on a monthly and even a weekly basis. If you think you can do better than Kevin Keegan, check the address below.

www.freeserve.net/fantasy_league/

Cash back on your PC

Freeserve has always given members several things for free – free connection to the Net, free e-mail addresses, free Web space, even free calls through the 162 service (see the website at *www.freeserve.net/time/* for further details). But the latest crazy scheme tops all these: Freeserve is to stump up the cash for 100 brand new PCs! It works like this. If you buy a PC from Dixons, PC World or Currys between 21 November and 29 January, make sure that you get a free start-up Freeserve CD and sign up on-line. Because if you do go to the Freeserve portal and register your name, your name will be entered into a competition, and 100 winners will get the price of their brand new PCs refunded! So whether you're buying a PC as a Christmas gift or splashing the cash in the January sales, remember you could get the PC to get you on-line absolutely free.

WINNERS

Freeserve competitions

Garry Kennedy of Rhyl was the lucky winner of a 36-inch Panasonic T[tau] widescreen TV in November's competition. Andrea MacArthur, Malcolm Allen, Sarah Seavers and Philip Topping had to make do with a mere 32-inch TV. Jennifer Soppitt of Antrim won the Technics hi-fi from the same issue, Michael Harrison won a Panasonic DVD player, and Vicki Wise and Phillip Simm won Panasonic MiniDisc players. Paul Dykes of Scarborough scooped a set of Callaway golf clubs. Finally, the weekend for two in Paris via Eurostar was won by Guy Mortlock of Leicester. Next time, it could be you…

istmas

recommended by

free serve

www.freeserve.net

As if all this wasn't enough, there's also a free on-line e-zine. Here, users find news and features, together with reviews and previews of the next big thing as put together by @jakarta's content partners and dedicated editorial team.

So whether it's for a sure-fire present or your own gain, check out Freeserve's games channel.

www.freeserve.net/games

The Freeserve homepage was "hijacked" recently with the launch of the iCircle women's channel. "The men can wait for once – they've got the time," said iCircle vice president Sarah Carpenter. "We're putting women first."

serve is the UK's No.1 for the Internet"

John Pluthero, Chief Executive

Y2K: it's OK

As we head toward New Year the Millennium Bug will become even more of a topic of discussion. Freeserve has undergone rigorous and stringent testing to be as Bug-proof as possible, the Microsoft software on the Freeserve CD is Y2K compliant, and all the content of Freeserve's partners will be OK. Not all the other sites on the Web will be functioning properly by January; the responsibility for individual sites lies with the owner. If you have problems with your computer – and it should only be older computers which suffer – it's likely to be the fault of the manufacturer. Check the sites below for more details.

www.freeserve.net/support/
www.bug2000.co.uk/
www.microsoft.com/y2k/

Bet on Freeserve

Fancy yourself as an expert tipster? Here's your chance to put Freeserve's money where your mouth is. Freeserve has teamed up with top betting site Blue Square to give you a free £10 bet on whatever you like. Simply register as an account holder with Blue Square, place a bet and you'll get a tenner to wager. Now all you've got to find is a three-legged 10,000-1 shot that's a dead cert…

www.freeserve.net

Disney do well

No-one sums up the magic of Christmas quite like Disney, and this festive season Freeserve and Disney have launched a new Christmas Magic contest with big prizes. First you help Mickey to throw snowballs at friends (but not Minnie!), then answer some quiz questions. The top scorers go through to a draw with prizes including a trip to Disneyland Paris, so soon you could experience the magic yourself!

www.freeserve.net

Page concern

The Freeserve e.notifier forwards your e-mails to a hand-held pager. And as if that wasn't useful enough, there are a few handy new features on the e.notifier: you set filters so you only receive messages of a certain type or from nominated people, you can set the e.notifier to remind you of one-off or recurring events, and you can send messages to other users via the Web for free!

www.pageone.co.uk/mmfreeserve.htm

PA, Telegraph Colour Library

Christmas hoppin

Whatever you want from the Net, you'll find it on Freeserve's many channels

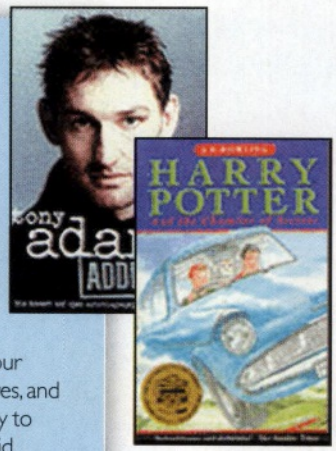
Shopping

Freeserve's shopping channel has been updated as the new SHOP@freeserve channel. If you want flowers or food, a car or a computer you'll find it here. Save time and money – shop direct from your desktop!

Communications

Freeserve's Speechmail feature lets you access e-mail by phone. Our new e.notifier e-mail to pager service will keep you in touch with your Freeserve e-mail account while you are offline. Prestophone brings you big savings on your phone bills with an Internet-based phone account, and you can make great savings on national and international calls.

Books



Shopping for books can be hard on the feet and the wallet. Let BOL, our on-line bookshop, take the weight off both, with up to 50 per cent off the latest bestsellers. View our on-line bookshelves, and when you're ready to buy you'll find rapid ordering and delivery. Book some time on-line with BOL now.

Film and Cinema

If you're a major movie mogul we've got what you want. We cover all the latest cinema and video releases and go in heavy on all the big blockbusters. Play games, read news and enter competitions – you'll be way too busy to go to the movies!

News

Get tomorrow's papers today with our superb news service. You'll get all the latest UK and foreign stories, together with technical and business news and a complete rundown of headlines from the national press.

Money

Freeserve has all the latest figures on every major firm and financial instrument, along with comment and analysis from the best in business, including Motley Fool and Mrs. Cohen. If you want to challenge your investment skills try our fantasy share portfolio game.

Chat

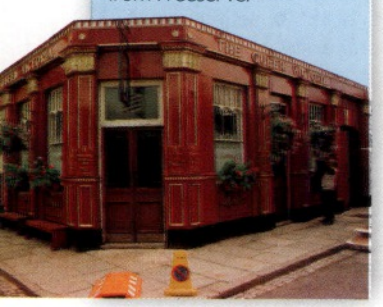
Freeserve's ever-popular chat service is a great hit. Now you can use our new 3D chat rooms to get around and explore virtual reality worlds – you've got to try it to believe it!

Careers

We've got the world of work wired. Our Careers channel lets you search databases of 70,000 jobs nationwide and even apply on-line. You can submit your CV and and let employers who need your skills in your area seek you out. The way we find work is changing – let Freeserve help you make the most of it.

TV and radio

Not only do we give you full TV and radio listings specific to your area, our critics will even advise you what to watch if you just can't decide. But only if you can tear yourself away from Freeserve!



Football

Barmy about the beautiful game? Our Football channel caters for even the most obssesive fan. There's a complete results service, full table listings and stats for clubs from the Premiership down. There's a complete news service, a database of top players and pages on all the big clubs.

Horoscopes

Let a star read your stars! Celebrity astrologer Russell Grant offers Freeserve members daily, weekly and monthly readings for all star signs.

Food and drink

From recipes to restaurant guides and cocktails to competitions, we have everything you coould possibly need to feed your food fetish!

Sport

Whatever your sport, you'll find it on Freeserve. Rugby, Formula 1 or golf; you can get the results and follow your heroes on the Sport channel. Look out for Freeserve's new golf content including the history and rules of the game and even weekly golf lessons to bring down that handicap.

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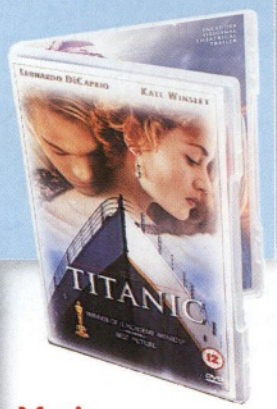
www.freeserve.net

Business Centre

Freeserve's new Business Centre provides essential on-line resources for your business. You can get business news, design business cards enjoy cheaper and more effective communications and maximise your company's potential with our range of on-line business tools and resources. Visit today and enter our prize draw to win a Hewlett Packard Office Jet R65 all-in-one scanner, copier and printer.

Entertainment

Staying in? We've got TV listings and soap updates. Going out? We'll show you the best in theatre, cinema, comedy and more near you, with times, prices and venues. You can even buy the latest DVD movies on the Net.



Travel

Click on Freeserve's travel channel for instant access to our database of 70,000 flights and holidays worldwide. There are always sensational last-minute deals on offer. Also check out our on-line travel guide featuring all you need to know on your destination with climate, maps, money, getting visas and much more.

Music

Whether it's Boyzone or Beethoven we have news, reviews and event listings on everything musical. You can buy gig tickets and CDs on the Net in seconds, and take your time over our features and news stories. Sounds good.

Education

From pre-school through to GCSE, the Freeserve Education channel provides the interactive environment that is needed to encourage learning new skills.

Domain names

Make the most of your free 15 megabytes of Web space with our domain name service. If you're setting up a site for your business, club or just for yourself you can register your very own web address. You can choose a memorable name that reflects the content of your site, and see if it's available with our free search facility.

FOCUS

Carol Vorderman's been there, done that and bought the T-shirt

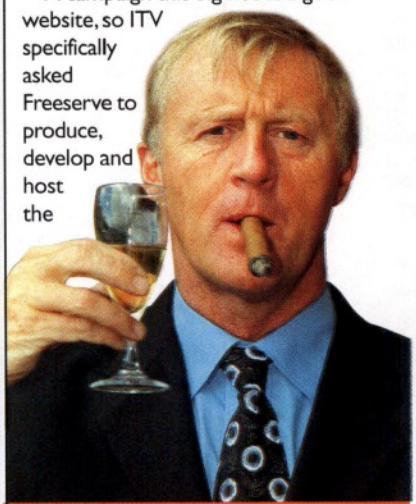
The stars come out for a new Year of Promise

The advent of the new year always brings with it a spate of resolutions, vague promises we make in the heat of the moment and spend two weeks making a vain attempt to stick to. But this time it's the start of a new millennium, and it's time to make promises stick.

Luckily this time there's a high-profile campaign to help us live up to our good intentions. And as ever, Freeserve is happy to help.

ITV's Year of Promise is the UK's biggest ever TV campaign, with eight months of televised promising. The idea is simple: we all try our best to make our mark on the new millennium by making – and sticking to – a simple promise in an attempt to make the world that little bit better. Whether it's promising to help out those in need or just trying to keep your temper in check, it's all for the common good.

A campaign this big needs a good website, so ITV specifically asked Freeserve to produce, develop and host the site, www.itv.yearofpromise.co.uk. As the nation's number one ISP, Freeserve was happy to manage the core of the campaign: the massive database of all the promises made.



A suitably festive Chris Tarrant promises to record a book for the blind each year

Call from the stars

It's not just members of the public who are making the promises. The campaign launched in October, and there's another big special on ITV in December. Here you'll see several celebrities doing their bit for the cause, from Chris Tarrant promising to record a book for blind people every year to Martine McCutcheon promising to buy the Big Issue every week. Promises range from the worthy (Carol Vorderman wants to get 500 computers into children's hospital wards) to the witty (Emmerdale's Clive Hornby wants to get his handicap down).

Joining in

Thanks to Freeserve, it's easy to join in and make a difference. You can surf straight to the Year of Promise site, powered by Freeserve, or you can get there from Freeserve's own site to make your on-line promise. Otherwise, you could pick up your registration forms in branches of Dixons, Currys, PC World, The Link and @jakarta.

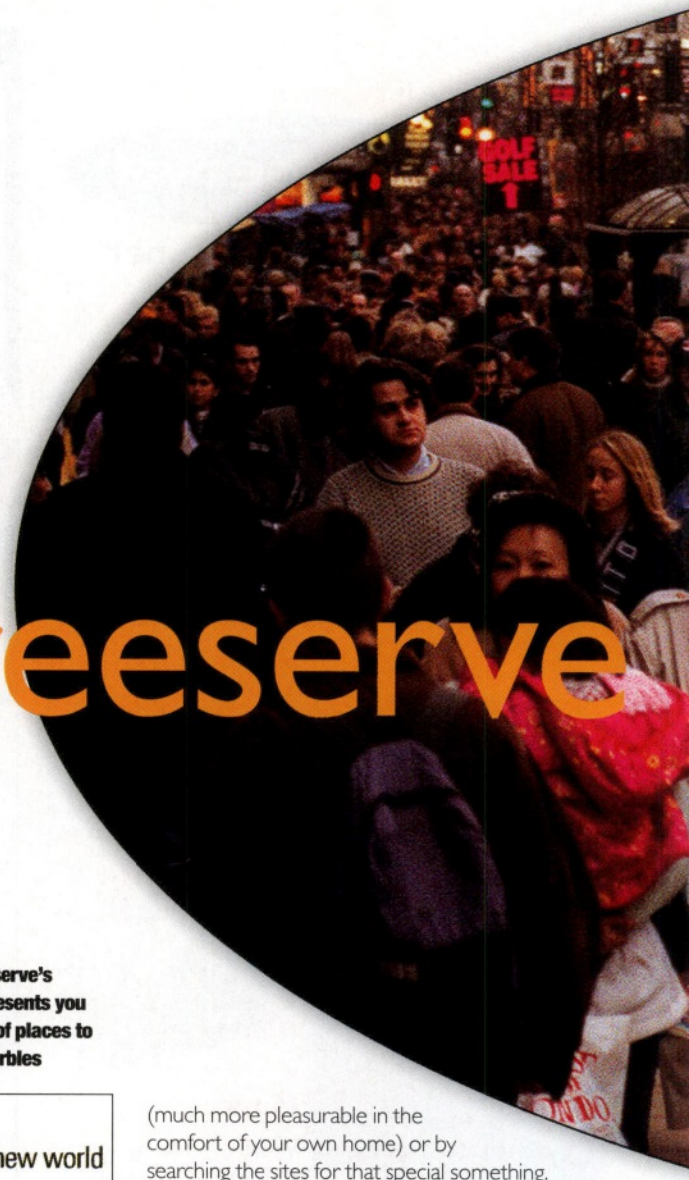
Freeserve's promise

Freeserve is supporting youth sports in the UK, particularly the Millennium Youth Games in association with Sports England. That'll be with the help of Freeserve member Greg Rusedski. So what's your promise?

PA

Fancy battling through these crowds to get those Christmas presents? Thought not. Here's how to get the gifts without even leaving the house. *by Gary Parkinson*

How to SHOP@freeserve



SHOP@freeserve's front end presents you with plenty of places to use your marbles

Christmas is coming, and your goose will be cooked if you don't get all the right presents for all the boys and girls who've been good this year.

Now according to the popular refrain heard at this time of year, 'tis the season to be jolly. But for those who hate the annual trudge up and down the crowded High Street looking for presents, jolliness is in very short supply.

There's the crowds in your way, rain in your face, queues at the checkout, goods selling out before you get to them, and the looming threat of having to carry several heavy bags of delicate presents home – either on to public transport which is even more crowded than the streets, or to a car parked in a gloomy back-street.

It all makes you long to be at home, enjoying the Internet...

Save yourself the effort

Well now you can shop and surf. Internet shopping, also known as e-commerce, has been the big business success story of the year and represents the future of purchasing.

Recognising this, Freeserve has radically redesigned and updated the shopping channel. SHOP@freeserve has been designed to take the hassle out of shopping. So you can avoid the crowds, the rain, the sellouts, the lugging bags about and, best of all, never leave the house!

How does it work? You simply surf to the SHOP@freeserve site, which you can find at www.freeserve.net/shopping/, and check out the list of departments and retailers. It's already a sizeable list, going from the suitably seasonal eToys and Clearwater Hampers to the ever-handy Iceland, Interflora, BOL and Bargain Holidays, with plenty more in between – see the panel to the right; more names are being added each day to extend your choice.

With such a wide range of gifts to choose from, it'll not be too long before you find what you want – either through window-shopping (much more pleasurable in the comfort of your own home) or by searching the sites for that special something.

Save time and money

There are definite advantages, beside staying at home, to shopping on-line. Often, items are cheaper. This is because the new Internet-based retailers can avoid the considerable overheads involved in maintaining huge High Street stores, instead delivering from remote warehouses in low-rent locations. These savings are then passed on to the consumer.

But for every new e-commerce retailer springing up to take advantage of the Web's possibilities, there's a traditional High Street retailer seizing the chance to use the new medium. If you know you want an item from PC World, Thorntons or Dixons, they're all on-line now with a full quota of goods.

Perhaps the biggest benefit of home shopping is that the goods are delivered to your door. Many of Freeserve's partners don't charge

"Window-shopping is much more pleasurable in your own home"

for delivery, and some will even get the goodies to you by the next day.

Safe and sound

It's never been safer to shop on-line. The Freeserve Promise (see right) guarantees you security, choice, customer service, privacy, quality and value for money.

For a start, all Freeserve's partners sign an agreement pledging to protect the consumer. As a result, you can be sure that your details won't be sent on if you don't want them to be.

On-line shopping has been made completely safe through innovations like marbles. No, not the children's ball game, the 60-second on-line decision credit card.

Launched by Freeserve and HFC Bank, marbles has a copper-bottomed safe shopping promise: in the unlikely event that your marbles card should ever be used fraudulently without your knowledge, you don't have to pay a penny.

And it's easily done – whereas applying for credit cards can be a long drawn-out process involving loads of jargon, marbles has a simple on-line application form and you can be accepted within a minute. You can then use the card on the Net and even in the High Street, should you ever venture there again.

Whether you use marbles or not, scares over Web shopping safety have been greatly eased as more and more people find out that, as long as you stick to the recognised names that you (and Freeserve) trust, Net shopping is considerably safer than, say, lugging your presents to your car in that dingy back-street.

If you're concerned about Net security, take a look at the Helpdesk section on pages xiv-xv for hints on how to keep your transactions safe. But hurry – there are only a few more (24-hour) shopping days left till Christmas…

Freeserve Promise

Security Freeserve guarantees you a safe shopping experience.
Choice The widest choice of retailers from High Street brands to on-line retailers.
Quality and value for money A wide variety of products at competitive prices.
Customer service All the chosen retailers are committed to excellent service.
Privacy All the retailers work within the Data Protection Act to guard your privacy.
World Wide Web The marbles credit card is guaranteed to be safe against Internet fraud.

SHOP@freeserve partners

BOOKS
BOL
Magazineshop

BUSINESS SERVICES
Buy.co.uk
Cardcorp

COMPUTERS & SOFTWARE
PC World
@jakarta
Net nanny

ELECTRICAL GOODS
Dixons
Partmaster

FASHION & ACCESSORIES
easyshop
the clothes store
Maple Drive

FINANCIAL SERVICES
marbles
Hamilton Direct Bank

FLOWERS & GIFTS
interflora
Propagangsta
Hotbox
Cybercard

FOOD & DRINK
Iceland
Clearwater Hampers
It's Wine
Fruit Baskets
Thorntons

FURNITURE
PC World

HEALTH & BEAUTY
Lookfantastic.com
Direct Lenses

MOTORING
Exchange & Mart

MUSIC & MOVIES
DVDstreet
Audiostreet
Darker than Blue
Songplayer
Aloud.com

PETS
Pets Pyjamas

SPORTS & LEISURE
kitbag
The Pro Shop
Newitts
Bluesquare

TOYS
eToys

TRAVEL
Complete Skier
Bargainholidays.com
Last Minute
1 Ski

PA

Where to SHOP

So you're on-line and you've got to buy Christmas presents but you need some gift ideas? Try these.

Christmas comes but once a year, and those of us who have to find presents for junior relatives will be glad of that. But the annual grind of finding presents has been lifted by the advent of a new toys and games website – eToys.

Last Christmas, eToys was the third most visited site in the US. Now eToys has launched in the UK and has teamed up with Freeserve at www.freeserve.net/shopping/toys.htm, with favourites like Postman Pat, Action Man and Noddy.

And boy, is it a whopper. Whatever toy you're after, it'll be here somewhere among the rafts of kiddies' goodies on offer – more than 5,000 toys, the largest Net selection in Britain. But don't be put off by the sheer number of toys: the archive is searchable by character, age range, price range, brand, category or gift idea.

If you don't know your Pokémon from your Postman Pat, don't worry. eToys was set up by an uncle who didn't know what to get his nephew and niece. Judging by the site's success, he appears to have struck a chord.

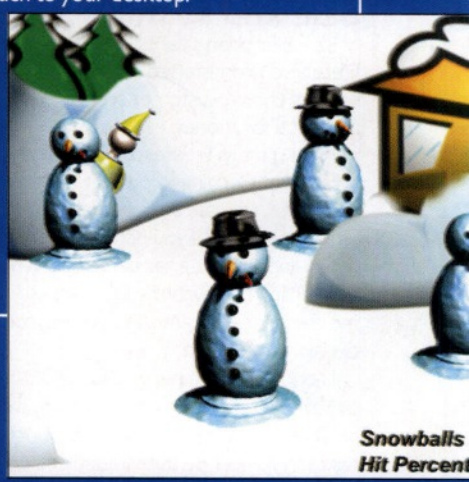
Santa's site on the Web

Some of the most popular sites every December are the Christmas sites, and the Freeserve Christmas channel is one of the best.

It's a suitably festive treasure trove of features and links. The big draws at this time of year are the on-line Christmas cards and the children's wishlists for Santa. The free cards save you a lot of trouble and expense searching for and posting real Christmas cards, while the wishlist proves that today's kids have taken the technological age in their tiny strides.

There's a host of cringeable jokes, with corny knock-knock and doctor-doctor favourites for the kids and some slightly more risqué ones for the adults! You can improve your shot with a super Shockwave game which involves snowballing cheeky pixies as they dance around the garden and behind the snowmen, or play more traditional games such as Hangman, Crossword and Pairs. If you want to make your computer a touch more Christmassy, you could dip into Santa's bag of snowy screensavers to add that festive touch to your desktop.

If you feel lucky, there are competitions to win a Millennium jigsaw puzzle (with 1000 pieces, naturally) and two board games – Abalone and Pass the Bomb. And there are plenty of links to other Freeserve sites, including SHOP@freeserve and the Freeserve TV guide so you can plan that all-important telly schedule for when the relatives come to visit!



Snowballs
Hit Percent

Top ten toy tips from eToys

1. **Pokémon** Collect all the "Pocket monsters".
2. **Action Man** This year, he's on a mountain bike.
3. **Star Wars** Over 250 items on the eToys site.
4. **Generation Girl Barbie** A Millennium woman.
5. **Furbie Babies** Children of last year's big hit.
6. **Finger decks** Skate boards for the fingers.
7. **Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?** The board game of the quiz show.
8. **WWF Wrestling Figures** Grappling fun.
9. **Bounce-around Tigger** Winnie Pooh's friend with a spring in the tail.
10. **Dreamcast** Quite simply the best console ever.

"eToys was set up by an uncle who didn't know what to get his nephew"

@freeserve

powered by freeserve

www.freeserve.net

ICELAND

Delivering the goods

Remember when Tomorrow's World told us that in the future we'd be able to get the weekly shopping from home? Well the future is now at Iceland, the first food retailer in the world to offer free 24-hour national home shopping and delivery.

All you need to do is surf to Iceland at the food and drink section of SHOP@freeserve, choose your goods and select which two-hour period the following day you'd like to receive your things. The order is passed to your local Iceland, where trained staff pick and pack the shopping before driving it round to you in a refrigerated van.

It couldn't be much simpler. You can even customise your "shopping basket" to make repeat orders easier. So there's no need to keep struggling back to the car – or worse, the bus – overladen with heavy bags!

But if Iceland is committed to making it easier to shop, it's also committed to making your food safer. More than 18 months ago, Iceland became the first food retailer in the world to remove genetically modified ingredients from its own-brand goods, after consulting with the public. And now Iceland has gone a step further by removing all artificial colours, flavours and (where safe) preservatives from its own-brand produce.

AUDIOSTREET & DVDSTREET

Sound as a pound

Who doesn't like music? Everybody has their favourite tunes and tunesmiths. And now they're available on-line through Audiostreet.

Whatever numbers you're seeking you'll find them here, from indie to classical, rock to world music. There's an easily searchable archive to help you find the artist you're after, with latest charts and special offers.

Having found the CD you want, chances are it'll be cheaper than on the High Street. And of course all transactions are secure and delivery is free.

Audiostreet is part of the Streets OnLine shopping service, which also offers an extensive range of DVDs – both music and film.

If you haven't yet caught on to DVD, it's time to have a look because the increasingly popular format is the future of home entertainment. The top on-line Region 2 supplier, DVDstreet has all the latest releases and you can even earn money off your purchases by writing reviews!

KITBAG

Pack up your troubles

Everybody knows somebody who'd be delighted to get a sporting gift for Christmas, and the chances are they'll have what you want at Kitbag.

Kitbag sells licensed sports goods such as replica shirts, retro shirts, videos and souvenirs – over 650 products and rising all the time.

If football's your game, you can choose from the shirts shown above and many more, or turn to the classic designs of the past for that retro look.

If you like the sound of willow on leather, you should note that England cricket warm-up shirts have been reduced by £10 to £29.99.

And whatever your sport, you'll be happy to hear that delivery – next-day, at that – is free in the UK.

EASYSHOP

It's a smalls world

Small things amuse small minds, but ladies' smalls are big business and Easyshop goes to prove it. Whether you're after the camisole worn by Nicole Kidman in Eyes Wide Shut or the Wonderbra made famous by Eva Herzigova, you can order it at www.easyshop.co.uk. From briefs to bras and slips to stockings, Easyshop has women's underwear covered.

Add an extensive selection of perfumes and even some stylish briefs for blokes, and you've got a one-stop shop for female frills. Never was a site better named. There's free delivery, often next-day, and a no-quibble return policy for if she's not happy.

You (almost) can't go wrong.

Top 5s

AUDIOSTREET CDS

1 LOVE AND THE RUSSIAN WINTER *Simply Red* **(£11.99)** Perennial soul man Mick Hucknall's done it again…

2 THE ANNUAL MILLENNIUM EDITION *Various, mixed by Tall Paul & Judge Jules* **(£12.99)** The Ministry of Sound lays down the laws of the dance.

3 CLAPTON CHRONICLES *Eric Clapton* **(£11.99)** Consummate balladry mixed with rocking out.

4 RELAX *Classic FM* **(£13.99)** The perfect foundation for a classical collection.

5 NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL MUSIC 44 *Various Artists* **(£13.99)** Still the best chart collection around.

DVDSTREET DVDS

1 MATRIX (£17.99) Keanu Reeves' eagerly awaited sci-fi, stuffed with amazing special effects.

2 NOTTING HILL (£17.77) Hugh and Julia fall in love in the biggest romantic Brit-flick since 'Four Weddings…'

3 MASK OF ZORRO (£17.99) Watch Antonio Banderas buckle his swashes in the exciting classic story.

4 GHOSTBUSTERS (£17.99) Classic comedy with the best Region 2 extras.

5 BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: THE ENCHANTED CHRISTMAS (£13.99) The Disney sequel, happily released just in time for Christmas.

Auctions are no longer about dusty rooms and men in macs raising their index finger. More and more people are enjoying the benefits and pleasures of on-line auctions, and Freeserve's new auction channel is the best of the lot. Read on to discover how you could be sitting on a goldmine.

Awesome Aucti

It's two a.m. and the auction is about to close. Yours is the highest bid, but you can't be sure there isn't another bidder waiting to outbid you at the last moment for your dream holiday, football catalogue, digital camera, painting... The waiting seems endless until the e-mail finally drops in your mail box: "Congratulations. You are the successful bidder for Lot Number 13638".

Welcome to the wonderful, exciting world of the on-line auction where the world's riches are lain out before you in hundred of categories awaiting your bids. And for Freeserve users, the news gets better with the launch of fsauctions, Freeserve's very own auction site.

If you think auction sites are like Sotheby's or Christies, think again. It's on a much bigger scale, more like a cross between a bazaar, a smart antique shop and a car boot sale. But not only can you find something you have been seeking for a long time, you also get to sell things as well. And as with any market or auction room, half the fun is seeing what everybody else is buying.

Most visitors start as buyers, surfing out of curiosity and then spotting something they have been wanting for a while. They notice a couple of low bids, realise the price is reasonable and decide to have a go.

Before anyone can buy or sell, they have to register with the site. This means leaving contact details (name, address, e-mail and so on) to allow Freeserve to get in touch with the lucky winners. This also makes sure there are no fast ones pulled – by buyers or sellers. However, there is no charge for registration.

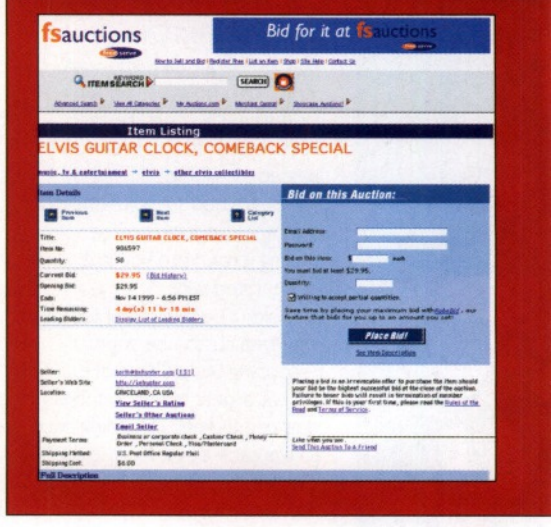
So you might register and bid, but you don't win. Then you see Billy Bremner's boots. You've supported Leeds United all your life and you have simply got to have this. You contact the seller to ask for details of authenticity, you bid determinedly, you make sure the emails from fsauctions are routed through to your pager so that if you are outbid, you can send a new bid immediately. Overnight you use robobid which automatically bids on your behalf to your specified limit. You've discovered the delights of auction buying: attaining the goods you want while gaining a sense of victory.

Once you have bought, you'll probably want to sell as well. Online auctions work on the principle that one person's rubbish is another person's gold. You may not want your grandmother's Fortuny dress, but there will be others who do – even if it needs repair. Often you can sell something that doesn't work anymore, but which might offer valuable spare parts that aren't available anywhere else.

If you have already registered as a buyer there's no need to register again, but fsauctions will ask for your credit or debit card details. Firstly, it's for security to check who you are, and also it's to take a small deposit from you which will be used as margin when you have sold the item. fsauctions earns its money when (and only when) you sell your items by taking a three percent margin. If you don't sell, then it won't cost you anything either.

Many people are discovering that online auctions are the best place to buy and sell on the Net. Some antique dealers have even shut their

The interface: how to make that purchase



"Online auctions work on the one person's rubbish is anoth

powered by

free serve

www.freeserve.net

ons

Step 1 Surf to www.fsauctions.co.uk and go through the quick and easy registration process. Then have a look around for something you want to buy.

Step 2 The picture on the left is a typical example. After checking the info on the left-hand side – which include the seller's contact details – enter your e-mail, password and bid in the space on the right.

Step 3 Check the time remaining to see when you'll find if your bid is successful. If the bids are coming in thick and fast, use Robobid to automatically keep you in the hunt for the goodies. Good luck!

principle that
er's gold."

shops and only deal through auctions. End-of-season designer clothes, excess stock digital cameras, old CDs, holidays and flights, even a few hours of a gardener's time, all these things can be bought through auctions, and buyers are using auctions to pay the price they want to pay.

So what's keeping you? Christmas doesn't have to be expensive!

Portable MiniDiscs are easily available on-line, as are flat caps (possibly)

Explaining the lot: what those terms mean

Bidding
At the heart of the auction process is the bid. Unlike normal transactions where the seller states the price, in an auction potential buyers offer to pay more in competitive increments. The final buyer is the person who bids the most.

Standard or English Auction
The seller starts the bidding at a certain price and is then obligated to sell to the highest bidder. There is no reserve price, so the highest bidder wins.

Reserve Auction
The seller specifies a minimum price at which they are prepared to sell. The bidding often starts beneath this reserve price. On fsauctions, reserve auctions have a red R logo beside them, which changes to green when the bid value is within 15% of the reserve price.

Dutch Auction
Dutch auctions are used when there are multiple identical items to sell. The seller specifies the number of items available and the starting price. Buyers then bid on the number of items they want. When the auction ends, the items are sold to the highest bidders at the lowest successful price. This means that in a Dutch auction, there can be more than one successful bidder.

Secure Intermediary Payments
In January, fsauctions will launch a security service for buyers and sellers. This provides both sides of the transaction with both assurance and insurance. The assurance arises from the intermediary process in which the buyer pays money into the client's account, the seller sends the item, and the money is released to the seller after the item has been checked to the buyer's satisfaction. This ensures that neither side can easily defraud the other. The process also provides insurance through Lloyds of London.

"For Sale"
Some sellers are prepared to accept a specific price for their item, rather than hoping for a bidding war to bump up the price. If the buyer bids this amount, the sale automatically takes place. On fsauctions, these items are described as "For Sale".

Closing Date
The date specified by the seller as the date and time when no more bids will be accepted. Bidding often accelerates close to the end of the auction. However, the auction always closes at least five minutes after the last bid. So in theory an auction could continue forever if the bids keep being made within five minutes of each other.

10x Bid protection
fsauctions has a special process that looks out for anomalies in the bidding, such as bids jumping tenfold. If the software identifies such a bid it will automatically ask the bidder whether this is the correct figure. This protects bidders against miskeying the keyboard.

Robobid
fsauctions' Robobid allows bidders to state their highest bid at the beginning of the auction. The software will then bid on your behalf until the bidding reaches your limit. fsauctions will e-mail you if you are outbid to ask whether you want to up the bidding.

Telegraph Colour Library, Steve Orino

Caught in the safety Net

Don't be worried by the odd scare story about the safety of shopping on-line. As Freeserve's technical guru **Gavin Sweet** explains, a few easy steps will keep you safe from the superhighway robbers.

As Christmas hurtles towards us in its usual way, many will be turning to on-line shopping in a bid to avoid he High Street crowds. However, some unhappy shoppers will miss out on the benefits of e-commerce because of worries about the security of spending money on the Internet.

The main area of security concern is over buying things via the Internet. Many Net users are naturally cautious about handing over their details to an unseen party. But while there have been examples of Net fraud, they are not nearly as common as you may have been led to believe and a few easy steps will protect you.

Don't trust dodgy geezers

First off, it's best to stick to sites that you trust. Just as you wouldn't give your credit card details to a dodgy back-street salesman, neither should you rush headlong into divulging your personal numbers on sites you've just casually surfed to.

Of course, all the traders on Freeserve's sites are scrupulously honest. Freeserve makes them sign an agreement pledging to protect the consumer, and the Freeserve Promise offers shoppers a fully secure experience.

Socket to 'em

Another method of protection is to use secure transactions with webservers using SSL (Secure Sockets Layer). Whether you're buying or just transmitting sensitive data, your browser should let you know that you are entering a secure area by popping up a window, and this should let you see the certificate that verifies site security.

You can now get special Net-proof credit cards such as Freeserve's marbles, which has an anti-fraud safe shopping promise whereby you don't pay a penny in the unlikely event that your card is used fraudulently.

Loyal mail

While we're on the subject of security, it would be good to have a few words about e-mails. As President Clinton found out to his cost during Monicagate, e-mails aren't the most secure method of communication. It's for this reason that you should never give your credit card details via e-mail – they are far easier to break into. Rest assured that Freeserve is at the forefront of e-mail security, and there are other ways you can cover yourself.

Don't give away your password, for example; don't be fooled by e-mails asking for it, as nobody official would give such a request. And change your password often, preferably including numbers if possible (it makes the password harder to decode). In general, be healthily sceptical and cynical about sites and you won't be duped.

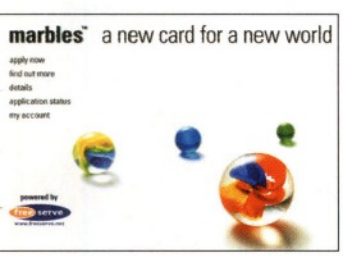
Mail and key mail

If you want technical back-up for this general advice, you can employ a couple of techie tricks to help out: personal digital IDs and PGPs. The personal digital ID uses public and private "keys" to encrypt messages, meaning that you can send messages with digital signatures so that only those you intend to read can access the e-mail. Digital IDs are issued by independent authorities; a quick look via a search engine will find various ID issuers.

PGP stands for Pretty Good Privacy and works along a similar principle, working alongside your e-mail programme to encrypt messages. It's so good that the US Government originally wouldn't let it be exported, but thankfully now it's available free from www.pgp.com.

Are you alone?

There's one final concern over security which arises if anyone else uses your computer. Microsoft's Internet Explorer 5, available free on the Freeserve installation CD, is a powerful piece of software, as we discovered in the last issue. However, one feature on IE5 designed as a timesaver needs to be considered carefully if your computer is used by more than one person.



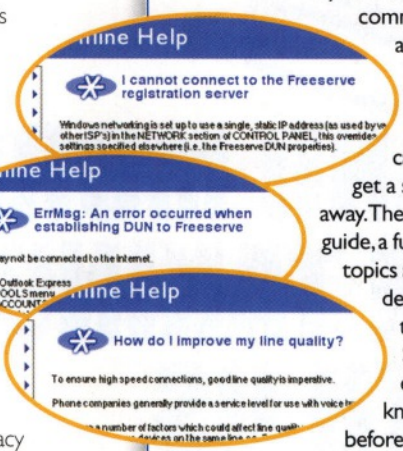
You won't lose your marbles with Freeserve's new Net-friendly credit card

When you enter a website which requires a username and password, such as UK Invest, IE5 prompts you to store your username and password. Upon your return to the site, IE5 will autocomplete the username and password for you – which is a great benefit if you are constantly visiting such a site, but it also means that anyone else using your computer can gain access to those secret details. It's a good labour-saving device but if you want to switch it off, go to the Autocomplete settings under the Content tab in Internet Options.

free serve www.freeserve.net/support

On-line help

We've put together an awesome set of answers for all your technical queries. It's available on our website – and it's free!

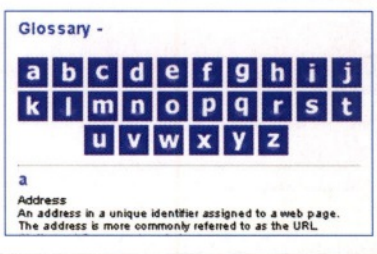


What are my options?

If you're new to the Net, Freeserve is committed to making it as easy as possible for you to get on-line. We've designed the help section on the Freeserve website so you can turn to Freeserve and get a straight answer, straight away. There's a complete content guide, a full alphabetical index of topics and a find function – all designed to take you straight to the answer you need. Separate sections deal with everything you need to know to avoid problems before set-up, and tell you what to expect as you begin to install the software from the CD-Rom onto your machine. It really is that easy!

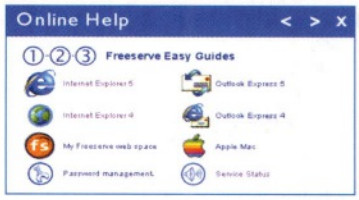
How does on-line help work?

It's easy too. There are four main sources of information. Read through the descriptions below and you'll soon see which best suits the type of query you have. Then connect to Freeserve, visit the help section and get all your questions answered quickly.



The Glossary

If there's an Internet expression you don't understand, turn to our glossary first. It's more than likely to be there.



The Easy Guides

If there's an area of your Net use that is causing you difficulty, turn to our Easy Guides for a complete solution. You'll find answers sorted by subject.

Questions and Answers

If there's a specific question you need answered, turn to our Q&A section for rapid help. First select the general area from our drop-down menu, then a specific question. You may find your question has already been answered.

Contacts

If you still need help, you can e-mail our support staff. They're the same people who man our phone helpdesks, and they're trained to deal with your queries. Direct e-mail addresses are listed on the contacts page. They'll be happy to help you!

How do I find answers on the Freeserve CD?

Alternatively, there's also a fully comprehensive Help feature on the Freeserve start-up CD-ROM. When you put the CD in your machine you'll be given four options. The help button takes you to a comprehensive set of instructions to help you get on-line with Freeserve.

Phone-line help

Our experts are on call 24 hours a day

Using Freeserve's on-line help couldn't be simpler, but from time to time you might have a direct question for one of our experts. To help you get the most out of your connection, Freeserve's Technical Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Make sure you've consulted our on-line help before you call, as you may find we've already answered your question. If not, our trained staff can provide you with instant answers in plain English on a range of Net subjects. Calls cost 50p per minute.

PC Support 0906 2517517 Mac 0906 7234000

Image Bank

MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE TAKING OFF WITH US

Over one million people surf the net with Freeserve. Our fast, reliable service and unique homepage provides instant benefits including:

- Top 10 CDs from £9.99 (including free UK delivery)
- Up to the minute financial & company information
- Save up to 50% on best selling books
- Keep in touch – phone to hear and reply to e-mails
- Last minute holidays and weekend breaks
- The latest news, sport, weather and much more

"I found it on freeserve"

THE UK'S No1 FOR THE INTERNET

free serve

www.freeserve.net

Join us on-line now or pick up a free CD at any branch of Dixons, PC World, Currys, The Link or @jakarta

Internet access is subject to standard local call rates.

stepbystep

From chatting online to sending email, you can find out more about it here. Plus, this month we try out Apple's iBook and show you how easy it is to set up a Webcam

Your technical problems well sorted with our easy-to-follow guide to the Net

WHAT IS THE INTERNET?

The Internet is a huge global network of computers, with literally millions of machines connected together across the planet.

HOW DO I GET ON IT?

All you really need is a computer, a modem, an Internet Service Provider (ISP) and a telephone line.

WHAT CAN I DO THERE?

1 **Surf the Worldwide Web.**
2 Send someone an email.
3 **Take part in a newsgroup discussion.**
4 Make friends and get chatting with people from all over the world.

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148 SETTING UP A WEB CAM It's so easy, we've even put one up in our office here at *the net*

They'll do anything to get you online

What Service Provider?

December 1999 There's a lot of them about – ISPs, that is. If you're wondering which is right for you, consult our easy-to-follow guide

What is an ISP?

An Internet service provider, or ISP, is a company that connects you to the Internet. All you need do is exploit the provider's permanent Net connection by connecting to it.

Get the best ISP deal

Right now, literally hundreds of ISPs are vying for your business – which is great news for consumers. But to help you make a truly informed decision, we've tested the best service providers on the market.

Below, you'll find our ratings for the current crop of the best ISPs looking to connect you. There are several companies that are now offering completely free access – and that includes the price of the phone call that connects you to the Internet. LocalTel pioneered this service back in the spring with the launch of Screaming.Net. Since then several companies have started to offer free calls to the Net at certain times of the day. CallNeto800 has also launched and is offering completely free access at any time of the day. This new breed of ISP is set to change the landscape of Net access in the UK, as several other service providers investigate the possibility of offering completely free access in a bid to keep up with new trends. In other words, the future couldn't be brighter for Net consumers, as the price of getting online continues to go down.

Call costs

It's worth checking how much you'll be paying for the phone calls that connect you to the Net. Apart from the new breed of free services, nearly every ISP charges local call rates. For BT customers, this means 4p/min on weekdays between 8am-6pm; 1.5p/min during off-peak times, and 1p/min at the weekend. Check with your phone company.

Speeding up

To say things are only going to get faster is an understatement. BT is currently trialling ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line). It will offer an 'always on' high speed connection to the Internet with data delivery speeds of 10-40 times a conventional modem. At the moment, most modems operate at 56kbps (kilobits per second) or less. For more info see ***www.bt.com/adsl/***

BEGINNER'S TIP

Put the phone number you use to dial up to the Internet on your BT Friends and Family list.

INTERMEDIATE TIP

Set up several free accounts. If for any reason you cannot connect to one provider, simply try another one. There's no limit to how many accounts you have.

ADVANCED TIP

Consider installing an extra phone line. It means you can have one for the phone and one for your modem, so you can use the Internet as much as you like.

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

ISP NAME	WEB ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF SERVICE
Aardvaak **FREE**	***www.aardvaak.co.uk***	London-based ISP which promises no banner advertising	Unlimited
AngliaNet Limited	***www.anglianet.co.uk***	Dial-up, web hosting and design for home and business users	Unlimited
AOL	***www.aol.co.uk***	A large ISP offering proprietary software to try to make connecting painless	Unlimited
Aviators Network	***www.aviators.net***	An ISP designed with aircraft related content for the pilot and the enthusiast	Unlimited
BREATHE **FREE**	***www.breathe.co.uk***	Well-established free ISP. Easy-to-use site design	Unlimited
BT Click **FREE**	***www.btclick.com***	Designed for experienced users (no tech support)	Pay As You Go
BT Internet	***www.btinternet.com***	Another Internet arm of BT offering a full access package	Unlimited
Bun **FREE**	***www.bun.com***	The free ISP offering of *The Sun* newspaper	Unlimited
Cable and Wireless Lite **FREE**	***www.cwcom.net***	Free Net access for CW customers	Unlimited
CALLNET **FREE**	***www.callnetuk.com***	Innovative free ISP offering enhanced web based services	Unlimited
CIX	***www.cix.co.uk***	The Compulink Information eXchange. Provides Internet conferencing accounts	Unlimited
ClaraNET Ltd	***www.clara.net***	Subscription based ISP with a range of account options to suit any needs	Unlimited
Compuserve	***www.compuserve.com***	Long-standing ISP who offers proprietary software to aid ease-of-use and level of service	Unlimited
Connect Free **FREE**	***www.connectfree.net***	One of the very first free ISPs	Unlimited
CYBERphile Internet	***www.cyberphile.co.uk***	Business-oriented, Midlands-based provider. Specialists in leased lines, LANs, firewalls, ISDN etc	Unlimited
Dabsol **FREE**	***www.dabsol.net***	Free ISP with online sign-up help and comprehensive features	Unlimited
Demon Internet	***www.demon.co.uk***	The UK's original dial-up account today aspires to be the industry's 'Premium' service	Unlimited
Direct Connection	***www.dircon.net***	Home and business ISP offering global roaming among their services	Unlimited
Easynet Ltd	***www.easynet.net***	Subscription based dial-up service. Winner of best European ISP at this year's ISPA awards	Unlimited
EidosNet **FREE**	***www.eidosnet.co.uk***	EidosNet is brought to you by Eidos, publishers of Tomb Raider and other great games	Unlimited
Enterprise plc	***www.enterprise.net***	Subscription based ISP with a host of features including game and news servers	Unlimited
F9 Free **FREE**	***www.f9.net.uk***	Free ISP from previously subscription only service Force 9	Unlimited
Firstnet Services Ltd	***www.firstnet.co.uk***	Business Internet solution provider	Unlimited
FirstWeb	***www.first-web.co.uk***	ISP based in Middlesex. Provides Internet solutions for businesses	Unlimited
Free Internet **FREE**	***www.free-internet.co.uk***	Free access, free mail and Web space. Comprehensive service in a neat package	Unlimited
FREENET **FREE**	***www.freenet.co.uk***	More free access with a gaming bias. Online auto sign-up and newsgroups add to the interest	Unlimited
Free Online **FREE**	***www.free-online.net***	Straightforward free ISP offering news and email	Unlimited
Freeserve **FREE**	***www.freeserve.net***	Free provider from the Dixons group of companies	Unlimited
Free to You **FREE**	***www.free2you.co.uk***	No frills free ISP with online sign-up	Unlimited

ISPs explained Using our easy-to-follow guide

FREE CONNECTIONS
There are now many companies that will get you on to the Internet without charging a subscription fee – the only thing you pay for is the price of the phone call that connects you.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES
Despite the plethora of free ISPs springing up, there are still many which charge a flat monthly fee. These generally offer free technical support, whereas most free ISPs charge by the minute.

CONTENT PROVIDERS
Content providers also charge to get you online, but provide exclusive content to members, and a sense of 'community'.

How the tables work

Description
A brief description of the services offered by the ISP in question.

Type of service
Tells you whether there is any restriction on how often you can use the Internet.

Phone number
The number to ring if you want to sign up.

Email addresses
Some service providers give you only one email address, others provide as many as you want.

Content
Outlines whether the service provider in question provides its own content and whether it is exclusive to its users.

Macintosh support
Not all service providers offer software and technical support for Macs, preferring to concentrate on PCs – so be sure to check this column out if you're an Apple user.

Web space
If you are interested in designing your own Web page, most Internet Service Providers will give you space to store it on. 2Mb should be enough for most people's requirements.

Set-up fee
Some ISPs charge a fee to open an account.

Monthly charge
If you don't go with a free ISP, then you'll pay a set amount per month to be online.

Phone support charges
Technical support is great – as long as you're not having to pay a fortune to benefit from it. Find out how much free service providers charge per minute for calls to their technical support desks.

Telephone support hours
The hours when the technical support desk will be open to take your calls.

Our ISP testing is carried out by NetBasics, an independent company specialising in providing ISP information for consumers and businesses. NetBasics makes every effort to ensure that the data presented to you is correct. The publishers of *the Net* and NetBasics cannot be held liable for any damages caused by the publication of this data. Any Internet service provider that wishes to be included in the evaluation programme should contact eval@netbasics.com **For more information on NetBasics, visit its Web site at *www.netbasics.com.***

	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	CONTENT	MAC SUPPORT	WEB SPACE	SET-UP FEE	MONTHLY CHARGE	PHONE SUPPORT CHARGES	PHONE SUPPORT HOURS
	Sign up online	1	None	No	0	0	0	Unavailable	n/a
	01473 211922	1	None	Yes	5Mb	None	11.75	Mobile	9-5 M-F, 8-9 S-S
	0800 3765432	5	Massive amount of content	Yes	10Mb	0	16.95	Free	8-10.30M-F 9-9.30S-S
	0700 2842867	1	'Flightalogue' lists a host of goodies	No	15Mb	0	11.75	Standard	9-9 7 days
	0870 6006006	5	Entertainment, sport, shopping, finance etc	Yes	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
	Sign up online	0	None	No	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
	0800 800001	5	None	Yes	10Mb	0	11.75	Local	24/7
	0845 3063636	5	Online dating, Bunshopping, *The Sun* online etc	Yes	25Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
	0800 0923 001	5	Channels and account administration	No	20 Mb	0	0	National	24/7
	0171 3358300	5	Chat servers, channels, services, Web news	Yes	20Mb	0	0	Free	24/7
	0845 3555050	Unlimited	None	Yes	30Mb	0	17.61	Local call	9-10 M-F, 12-6 S-S
	0800 3582828	Unlimited	None	Yes	25Mb	0	8.99	Free	24/7
	0990 000200	5	A large range of channels and a search engine	No	10Mb	0	16.95	National	8-12 Midnight
	Sign up online	Unlimited	Channel-based content provided by Virgin	No	Unlimited	0	0	Unavailable	24/7
	01543 454840	1	None	Yes	0.1Mb	0	11.74	Standard	8.30-6 M-F
	Sign up online	Unlimited	None	No	Unlimited	0	0	Metered	24/7
	0181 3711234	Unlimited	None	Yes	20Mb	0	11.75	Local	24/7
	0800 0720000	Unlimited	User zone containing handy member services	Yes	20Mb	0	13.50	Local	9-9 7days
	0171 6814444	Unlimited	None	Yes	2Mb	0	11.99	Free	24/7
	Sign up online	Unlimited	Free access to the Mplayer games network	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
	01624 677666	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	11.75	Local	9-10 M-F 10-4 S-S
	0800 0737800	Unlimited	None	Yes	15Mb	0	0	National	7-11, 7 Days
	0113 294 4224	Unlimited	Search engines and support	Yes	10Mb	0	12.50	Local	Business hours
	0870 7409223	4	None	No	5Mb	0	7.73	Local	24/7
	Sign up online	1	Newsgroups and IE5 download	No	10Mb	0	0	Metered	24/7
	01329 511611	Unlimited	Games links and independent status	Yes	20Mb	0	0	National rates	9-6 7 days
	0870 7060504	5	None	Yes	Unlimited	0	0	Premium rate	24/7
	0990 500049	Unlimited	Extensive channel based content	Yes	15Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
	Sign up online	Unlimited	Search engine page and technical support	No	10Mb	0	0	Available soon	n/a

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

ISP NAME	WEB ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF SERVICE
Freeway **FREE**	***www.freewayuk.com***	Free access, free mail and Web space. Comprehensive service in a neat package	Unlimited
Freewire **FREE**	***www.freewire.net***	Free ISP with no sign-up requirements	Unlimited
Freezone **FREE**	***www.freezone.co.uk***	A free ISP offering the usual package in a smart format	Unlimited
Gateway 2000 **FREE**	***www.ukgateway.net***	An ISP service from the hardware retailers of the same name. Packaged with Gateway computers	Unlimited
Go Free **FREE**	***www.gofree.co.uk***	Free ISP offering online sign-up, complete with helpline	Unlimited
IC24 **FREE**	***www.ic24.net***	The free ISP service of Mirror Group Newspapers	Unlimited
LineOne **FREE**	***www.lineone.net***	British Telecom's Internet service has recently dropped its subscription charge	Unlimited
London Web Comm Ltd	***www.londonweb.net***	An emphasis on corporate clientele. Useful London Local Directory	Unlimited
Netcom	***www.netcom.net.uk***	A comprehensive range of services to the home and business user	Unlimited
OrbitalNet **FREE**	***www.orbitalnet.co.uk***	Offers Web design, and domain hosting and registration	Unlimited
Paradise Internet Network Service	***www.pins.co.uk***	Paradise Internet is a subscription provider which also authors software	Unlimited
Screaming.net **FREE**	***www.screaming.net***	The pioneer of the free access and free phone call model	Unlimited
Sonnet Internet Ltd	***www.sonnet.co.uk***	Packages and solutions for the private and business user	Unlimited
This is it! **FREE**	***www.thisisit.co.uk***	End-user targeted free ISP	Unlimited
UK Fantastic **FREE**	***www.ukfantastic.net***	Spirited free ISP offering good online technical help	Unlimited
UK Online Ltd **FREE**	***www.ukonline.co.uk***	A family friendly free ISP with plenty of shareware and gaming software. Sign up online	Unlimited
UK People **FREE**	***www.ukpeople.net***	Free ISP, online chat, set-up and help	Unlimited
Virgin Net **FREE**	***www.virgin.net***	Long-standing ISP now offering a stylish free Internet access service	Unlimited
Which? Online	***www.which.net***	A free ISP from the consumer affairs magazine of the same name	Unlimited
Wireplay Internet **FREE**	***www.wireplay.com***	Wireplay is an online games network offering access to Intranet-based fast games servers	Unlimited
X-Stream Network **FREE**	***www.x-stream.com***	Offers enhanced member services, such as occasional free phone calls to the Net	Unlimited

Network performance

December 1999

Independent testing carried out by NetBasics – contact eval@netbasics.com

We test the best ISPs in the country for the reliability and speed of their connection. The tests are conducted in three areas and a star rating is given indicative of their performance. The three areas of testing are:

VARIATION IN MODEM SPEED

This is a gauge to measure whether you get a constant speed once a modem connects to an ISP. ISPs should offer a constant speed and we measure any variation. Each ISP starts with 100 percent and loses position the greater the variance in connection. This is achieved by comparison so that no ISP is favoured above others.

VARIATION IN TIME TO CONNECT

This section of the test measures the variation in how long it takes to get connected to your ISP. The reading is taken from the stage between clicking 'Connect' and then physically connecting.

AVAILABILITY

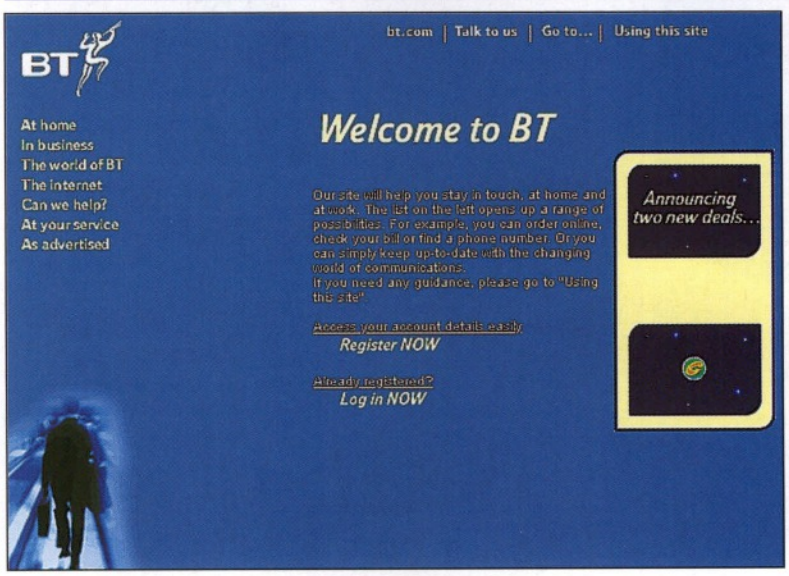
There's nothing more frustrating than dialling your ISP and finding you can't actually get through and on to the Net. This area measures how many times an ISP refuses to connect, either through the engaged tone, or if it does not respond correctly to modem signals. The results are combined into a single reading giving us a fair way to chart ISPs based on relevant aspects of their dial-in service. The results shown in the chart are based on a sample of 50 ISPs from ongoing tests.

1	AOL	★★★★★	26	Freeserve	★★★★
2	Cyberphile	★★★★★	27	Compuserve	★★★★
3	Enterprise	★★★★★	28	Wireplay	★★★★
4	Firstnet Services	★★★★★	29	Bun	★★★★
5	CIX	★★★★★	30	Dabsol	★★★★
6	Netcom Direct	★★★★★	31	ClaraNet	★★★★
7	Freeway UK	★★★★★	32	Screaming Net	★★★
8	Freezyou	★★★★★	33	X-Stream	★★★
9	CallNet	★★★★★	34	Breathe	★★★
10	Aviators Network	★★★★★	35	BT Click	★★★
11	Free-Internet	★★★★★	36	Demon Internet	★★★
12	EidosNet	★★★★★	37	LineOne	★★★
13	Connection	★★★★★	38	Virgin Net	★★★
14	Freenet	★★★★★	39	Cable and Wireless	★★★
15	This is IT	★★★★★	40	IC24	★★★
16	Easynet	★★★★★	41	UK People	★★★
17	London Web	★★★★★	42	UK Fantastic	★★★
18	AngliaNet	★★★★	33	FreeZone	★★★
19	Freewire	★★★★	44	Orbital Net	★★★
20	Go Free	★★★★	45	UK Online	★★★
21	Gateway 2000	★★★★	46	Which? Online	★★★
22	Paradise Internet	★★★★	47	Connect Free	★★★
23	Sonnet Internet	★★★★	48	BT Internet	★★★
24	F9 Free	★★★★	49	First Web	★★
25	Free-Online.net	★★★★	50	Aardvaak	★★

what service provider?

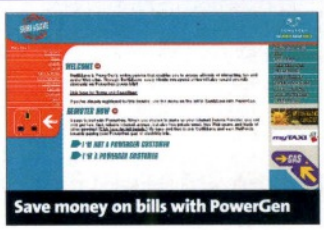
PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	CONTENT	MAC SUPPORT	WEB SPACE	SET-UP FEE	MONTHLY CHARGE	PHONE SUPPORT CHARGES	PHONE SUPPORT HOURS
0990 500049	Unlimited	Includes news, sport, weather, shopping	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	No	50Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0870 7441111	Unlimited	On-site search engine access	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
At Gateway Stores	Unlimited	None	No	10Mb	0	0	Free	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	No	20Mb	0	0	Metered	24/7
0870 9090262	Unlimited	Channel based content with news, sport, weather	No	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0800 111210	5	News, shopping, sport, community etc	Yes	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	8-Midnight M-Sa
0181 3494500	3	None	Yes	5Mb	15.00	12.50	Standard	9-9 M-Sa
0870 5668008	20	A business oriented portal site	Yes	25Mb	0	14.95	National	24/7
0800 389 1397	5	Coming soon	Yes	5Mb	0	0	Local	Business hours
01256 414863	1	None	Yes	2Mb	17.63	9.40	National	11-7 M-F
Sign up at Tempo	Unlimited	Travel, entertainment, business, sport etc	No	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0171 8912000	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	12.50	National	9-9 M-S
0906 9124000	Unlimited	None	No	20Mb	0	0	£1 per minute	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	0	£1 per minute	24/7
01749 333333	1	None	Yes	Unlimited	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	An online community, games and downloads	No	5Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0500 558800	5	Several Virgin channels	Yes	10Mb	0	0	£1 per minute	24/7
0645 830240	1	Online shopping and consumer affairs content	Yes	2Mb	11.75	14.75	Free	24/7
0845 757 7577	0	Games news, games chat, games add-ons	No	0	0	0	50p per minute	12pm-12 am, 7 days
0870 7306466	1	Chat, news, lifestyle, shopping, etc	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7

ISP NEWS IN BRIEF All the service provider news you need



Lukewarm reaction to BT offer

BT has reacted to pressure from several groups by announcing plans to 'reduce dramatically' the price of phone calls to the Internet. BT's proposal to communications watchdog Oftel gave ISPs the chance to allow their users to pay a set price for unlimited phone calls to the Net. However, the reaction of many Internet Service Providers was one of disinterest, claiming that users would not benefit from the new offer.


Save money on bills with PowerGen

They fixed it 4u

Scottish ISP 08004u was forced to close when 22,000 unregistered users gained access to the service. The company charges a flat rate for unlimited free access, but when people logged on they could do so without having registered, as any name and password gave access.
www.08004u.co.uk

Freeserve: waking up to Macintoshes

Surf and save

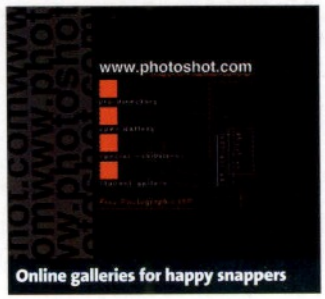
PowerGen has launched an ISP offering users money back on energy bills the longer they stay online. Anyone using the Net for an hour a day for a year would save £22 on their gas or electricity bill. The company is also offering £30 cashback to customers who apply online to receive gas and electricity from PowerGen.
www.pgen.net

I'd rather Mac

More than a year after launching, Freeserve is finally offering CD-based software for Macintosh users. The CD is available from any Dixons Stores Group shop, or download it from ***www.freeserve.net***

Smile, please

Photographers now have a dedicated Internet service, offering a searchable database of portfolios and an Open Gallery for users to exhibit work to the world. Another gallery has been set up for students.
www.photoshot.com



Online galleries for happy snappers

What kit?

Whether you're starting out or upgrading your system, we've put together the Internet-ready set-up to suit all of your needs

Your current PC is straining under the weight of all this frenetic activity on the Net. And while you've got the money to upgrade, you don't know what to buy. Which is where *the net* comes to the rescue. On these pages, we've suggested outfits to suit depending on your budget and requirements.

The 'Starting Out' pack provides the bare bones of the basic family Internet set-up – perfect for keeping the kids happy, or staying in touch with friends from foreign climes. 'The Sky's The Limit' set-up is designed for lovers of gadgets, add-ons and status symbols, while 'On The Move' shows you how to take your Net connection anywhere.

Meanwhile, you'll need the more mysterious terms explained:

RAM (random-access memory) is your computer's working memory, used for temporary data storage while programs are in use. The more RAM it has, the more things your computer can do at once. RAM is measured in megabytes (Mb).

Your **hard disk**, also known as the hard drive, is the long-term store for all your computer's information and programs. The bigger your hard disk, the more info it can hold. Applications and every other file you have on your machine take up storage space – so the more of it you have available, the better. The capacity of your hard disk is measured in gigabytes (Gb). The **processor** or **CPU** (central processing unit) is what powers your computer and controls its operation. Its processing power is measured in megaHertz (MHz). The higher the figure, the faster your computer works.

A **modem** lets your computer talk with others via phone lines and the Net. Its speed is rated in kilobits per second (kbps). The higher the speed of your modem (56kbps is the fastest), the faster data can be transferred from the Net to your computer.

THE 'STARTING OUT' SYSTEM

The complete family home computing solution giving you the freedom to work, play and get on the Net. **The most you'll spend: £2,040**

COMPUTER

Dell produces an outstanding range of computers, and the L466C is a real cracker. Shopping at Dell's Web site, we specified that this 466MHz Celeron-based machine (which gives blistering performance) should have a total of 128Mb of RAM, Dell's 17-inch monitor, an internal CD-ROM drive and a pair of speakers and a microphone, and it still cost us just £1,004.63 (inc VAT) plus shipping. You can customise your machine to your heart's content before you buy on Dell's Web site at ***www.dell.co.uk.***

Price £1,004.63
Phone 0870 1524699

SCANNER

If you're designing your own Web pages, you may want to add some pics from the family album. Or perhaps you'd like to send photos to relatives via email. The Umax 2000u should do fine.

Price £89
Phone 01344 871329

MODEM

3Com's 56K Voice Faxmodem is a super little device with great performance. If you want to access the Web or send and receive faxes, you can't go wrong with this model.

Price £199
Phone Virtually any reseller will supply this; try Dabs Direct on 0800 558866

PRINTER

You'll need something with which to output your letters, drawings and so on – and the Epson Stylus Photo 750 is a great choice. It gives clear colour reproduction and first-class colour accuracy all at a reasonable price.

Price £207.97 (inc VAT, approx)
Phone Again, try Dabs Direct

DIGITAL CAMERA

Olympus Camedia C-900 Zoom was featured in the September issue's digital camera test. The 1.3 million pixel camera handles well and can store up to 60 images.

Price £549.99
Phone 0800 0720070

...WHEN THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

Splash out on a powerful Internet set-up – surf the Net, play games, jazz up your site and show off to your friends. **The most you'll spend: £3,599**

PC

The Dan Ultimate is hard to beat for power at a reasonable price. It comes with a range of processors up to a 500MHz Pentium III, 128Mb of RAM, a 13Gb hard drive, a fast video card, and it even has a Zip drive and a modem included. Prices start at £1,298 inc VAT; the 500MHz Pentium III costs £1,555 inc VAT. You can have one built to your own specification at ***www.dan.co.uk.***

Price £1,298 or £1,555, both inc VAT
Phone 0181-830 1100

WEBCAM

Post your Webcam on your site so the whole world can see what's going on in your office, or use it for videochat with friends and colleagues around the world. Just plug in this Logitech QuickCam Home and you're away.

Price £99.95
Telephone 01306 734300

KEYTRONIC KEYBOARD

The Finger Scanner keyboard from Keytronic scans your fingerprint and lets you use it as a password to log on to your computer. Neat.

Price £149
Phone 01264 361555

DIGITAL CAMERA

Canon's PowerShot Pro 70 gives superb quality images and is designed for the pro. It's got space for two storage cards so you can store more of your favourite digital snaps.

Price £1,173
Phone 0121-680 8062

SCANNER

It's hard to beat the Umax range of scanners – and they're easy to use. The Astra 2400s high resolution scanning will bring real clarity to your work.

Price £299
Phone 01344 871329

PDA

The now Java-enabled Psion Series 5mx recently had a makeover with a faster processor and a slick new design.

Price £429.95
Phone 0990 143050

ACCESSORIES

The Kensington WebRacer has preset buttons you can program to take you directly to your favourite sites.

Price £49.99
Phone 01296 397444

PRINTER

It's Epson's Stylus Photo 750 again. For just over £200, the 750 delivers professional, photo-realistic quality output.

Price £207.97 (inc VAT, approx)
Phone 0800 220456

www.ractrackstar.com

Car thieves
We're behind you all the way

The new RAC Trackstar is the most advanced stolen vehicle recovery system. It can trace and locate a car to within 5 metres anywhere in the UK. A hidden receiver links the car to us via the GPS satellite system. We can then work with the police to recover the vehicle. (And often the thief.)

That's not all, if you're stuck at the roadside, you've got the option of a breakdown button* that enables us to pinpoint your position and get you moving quickly.

And if you have an accident, RAC Trackstar gives you the option of an emergency button* that sends your exact location to the Emergency Services. At the same time, opening a voice channel between the Operator and you inside the car.

RAC Trackstar is £347 inc VAT** or £312 inc VAT** for RAC Members. And for that kind of peace of mind, quite frankly, it's a steal.

The new RAC Trackstar is the UK's most advanced satellite-based stolen vehicle recovery system

- Protects your car
- Provides peace of mind
- Saves time
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WIRED ON THE MOVE

Just because you're away, it doesn't mean going without Net access. Here's what you'll need to go mobile. **The most you'll spend: £2,370**

PDA

If a laptop's too big, how about a PDA (personal digital assistant)? Try a Compaq Aero 2100 or the nifty Philips Nino.
Compaq price £350
Phone 0845 2704222
Philips price £365
Phone 0171-744 0095

DIGITAL CAMERA

Nikon's CoolPix 700 takes brilliant pictures, and there's a cut-down version of Adobe Photoshop thrown in.
Price £499.99
Phone 0181-541 4440

MOUSE

If you don't get on with your laptop's touchpad, you'll need a mouse – Logitech's Wheelmouse for Notebooks includes a wheel for scrolling without scroll bars.
Price £24.99
Phone 01306 734300

LAPTOP

Sony's VAIO range has been hailed as providing some of the most exciting laptops over the past year, and you could do a lot worse than choose any one of them. This C1 model boasts a built-in camera and a simple-to-use voice memo facility. Throw in a 266MHz processor, a 4.3 Gb hard drive, 64Mb of RAM and the fact that it only weighs 1.1kg, and this has to go on your Christmas present list.
Price £1,350
Phone 0990 424424

MOBILE PHONE

Still overladen? Ericsson's I888 World mobile phone might help. Its GSM technology lets it receive calls on five different continents.
Price £129.99
Phone 0990 237237

CHATBOARD Because it's good to type

Typing text into a mobile phone is easy with the Chatboard, a little silver keyboard that clicks into most Ericsson phone models.

When you buy the keyboard, you automatically receive a personal Chatboard home page on the Web. The keyboard allows you to send email and SMS messages via your Web site. By storing files on your site, you can send them as email attachments from your mobile phone.
Price £19.99
Phone 0990 237237

The thousand pound handbag

Apple's iBook has catapulted itself into the spotlight because of its stylish looks, but is the real star of the show an optional add-on?

It's smooth, sophisticated – and looks like a handbag. The new iBook may not be to everyone's taste (see panel below), but to dwell too much on appearances is to miss the point completely: the iBook is basically designed as a laptop for the family. Apple refers to it as a 'consumer' machine, and the bright colours and funky design are obviously intended to appeal to kids.

We got our mitts on one for a few days earlier this month. Looks-wise it's hard to resist, and it's pretty tough, being plastic edged with rubber, and designed to withstand the intense battering it will receive from the young user.

Just waiting to be stroked

In technical terms, the iBook isn't really anything special. It might have an impressive and whizzy 300MHz G3 processor and a 3.2Gb hard disk, but it only has 32Mb of RAM, which isn't an awful lot. Apple includes a copy of its AppleWorks integrated software suite, which includes basic word-processing, database and graphics tools, all of which tick along nicely, thank you very much. We did find that the iBook struggled a little bit on games that use complex 3D graphics, however.

What really makes iBook special, however, is the optional Airport wireless technology (see above panel), which means, in theory, you can surf the Net in the garden without having to plug iBook into a phone socket. Unfortunately, this wasn't available for testing at the time, and, sadly, neither was Apple's System 9.0 software. System 9.0 features the upgrade of Apple's search facility Sherlock to Sherlock 2, which uses a number of Internet search engines to find everything from a long-lost school friend to the best price for the latest Robbie Williams CD. Consider this alongside the convenience of Airport and you start to recognise the iBook's appeal as a consumer laptop (the lithium battery lasts around six hours).

So is it for you? Probably not if you need a top-of-the-range model for intense use at work. However, if you're looking for an affordable laptop with enough power to handle normal Web surfing and day-to-day tasks – and you like the idea of no cables trailing around the place – then iBook has a lot going for it.

Airport '99

An American sighting, 1999

One of the nattiest features of the iMac and iBook is actually an optional extra. Apple recently launched Airport, a wireless networking system which allows new Macs to connect to each other, to an office network, or to the Net, without cables, and it works from a distance of 150 feet. You need an Airport card to use it, which can be slotted into place on the main circuit board. If you want to connect more than two machines together, you can use the Airport base station unit. Shaped like a little silvery UFO, it also has a built-in modem which allows you to connect to the Net without having cables trailing all over the place.

AIRPORT CARD – £79 INC VAT
AIRPORT BASE STATION – £239 INC VAT

iMAC UPDATE

Two million people bought Apple's cute and stylish iMac after its launch last year, but a year is a very long time in the computer business and Apple has now given the iMac a facelift. The two great strengths of the original iMac – its simplicity and eye-dazzling fruity colours – have been retained. The monitor is still built into the same case as the main circuit board, so you can take the machine out of its box, plug in the couple of cables, and get going – in the time it takes to make a cuppa.

The basic iMac is only available in blueberry and has a muscular 350MHz G3 processor (roughly equivalent to a Pentium PC running at about 400-450MHz), plus 64Mb RAM and 6Gb hard disk. The iMac DV, which is available in all five fruity iMac colours, runs at 400MHz, with 64Mb RAM and 10Gb hard disk, complete with DVD player. Finally, there's the utterly sexy iMac DV Special Edition in translucent, silvery-grey casing. This also runs at 400Mhz, and has a whopping 128Mb RAM and 13Gb hard disk.

All three models have built-in speakers designed by Harman Kardon, a specialist in car audio systems. All three also have a more powerful graphics chip than before called Rage 128, which, while not exactly state-of-the-art, will give a more powerful gaming experience.

As you'd expect, the iMacs work with Apple's new Airport system, and the two DV models include 'FireWire' expansion sockets, which allow you to plug a DV camcorder into the machine so you can copy video clips on to your hard disk. Apple has also included an astonishingly easy-to-use video-editing program, iMovie. We created a three-minute office epic, complete with credits, in less than 10 minutes.

Steven Spielberg, watch out.

IBOOK – £1,249 INC VAT
IMAC – £799 INC VAT
IMAC DV – £999 INC VAT
IMAC DV SPECIAL EDITION – £1,199 INC VAT
APPLE UK – 0800 783 4846

Real men don't carry iBooks? Fashion accessory or serious laptop – or a bit of both?

STEPPIN' OUT: We don't recommend this sort of behaviour

One American journalist loudly proclaimed that 'no real man would be seen dead with an iMac' (you know what they say about the ones who shout the loudest).

While you can't deny that it looks like a handbag, Apple's new laptop, available in luscious blueberry and tangerine, is destined to become a design and fashion icon.

Happily, the beauty is more than skin deep. The keyboard is one of the most comfortable we've used, and a couple of evenings playing Nanosaur convinced us of the 12-in screen's ability to give a pretty good gaming experience.

The whole unit, which weighs 6.6lbs, is gloriously streamlined, with everything contained in the rubber-edged case. A word of note, though: don't parade around with it like our model – it's too desirable. And, while we hate to spoil the effect, buy a nondescript bag to put it in.

iBook
TIME To
IMPACT

Web browsers

Not ventured beyond Explorer or Navigator yet? Then maybe it's time you sampled Surf Monkey, or how about giving Opera a try?

What do I use to explore the Web?

The software you use to look at pages on the Web is called a 'browser'. The most popular are Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator. If you have a PC running Windows 95 or 98, you will almost certainly have Internet Explorer already installed. However, Navigator and other browsers such as Opera run in much the same way.

What are my options?

Statistically, Internet Explorer is the most popular browser on the planet. Together with its nearest competitor, Netscape Navigator, it accounts for 97 percent of all Web page hits.

With the facilities that the two offer, it's hardly surprising that they rule the roost. Internet Explorer 5.0 is the current leader of the Internet pack. It's packed – jam-packed, in fact – with features.

Netscape Navigator 4.08 represents the only serious competition to Internet Explorer. But it still can't reach the dizzying heights of IE – in fact it's slipped so much in popularity that Web site designers now often make sure their pages look right in IE alone.

You would've thought that with the market pretty much sewn up between the big two, no-one would be foolhardy enough to attempt to write a rival browser – but there are others. Opera, for example, is a tiny little number at 1.5Mb (compared with Netscape Communicator's 10Mb+). It's fast, but it's let down by an ugly look. The Opera equivalent for Macs is iCab. It has many of the excellent features of Opera, but it looks and works even better.

If you want a real rebel browser, try Lynx. It's text only, so it cuts down on download times. For children (or adults who are kids at heart), there's Surf Monkey, which lets you blow up Web pages you don't like, or gloop green paint all over them.

Saving sites in Internet Explorer

Typing in the name of a Web site every time you want to visit it can be a pain – especially if it's a long and complex name. Fortunately, all Web browsers have a way of saving the locations of sites you like, so you can revisit them without needing to retype them. In Internet Explorer these saved site addresses are called Favourites, while Netscape Navigator calls them Bookmarks.

1 From the Favourites menu, choose 'Add to Favourite.' The keyboard shortcut for the move is Control D.

2 When asked whether you want to subscribe to the site, choose the 'No, just add this page to my Favourites' option. You'll see the title of the page in the 'Name' section of the site; if this is not descriptive enough for you, type a five or six word description of the site. Then hit OK.

3 You will now find that the site has been added to your Favourites menu. To visit the site, just click 'Favourites' and then go to the menu list and select it.

Supercharge your browser

Your basic Internet Explorer set-up comes with several 'plug-ins'. These are additional pieces of software which enable your browser to play, for example, multimedia effects such as the Inspector Gadget trailer below. If you arrive at a site requiring a plug-in that you don't have, you'll be prompted to download and install it. The essential plug-ins you'll need to get the most from your browsing include: RealPlayer, which lets you watch videos or listen to music Shockwave, for animation and sound; and QuickTime, which plays video and sound.

No clever gizmos needed – just QuickTime

Installing a plug-in

1 When you visit a site requiring a plug-in, a prompt appears. Click 'Get Plug-in' and you'll be taken to the plug-in's home page.

2 Click on the link where you can 'Get' or 'Download' the plug-in.

3 Explorer will automatically put the plug-in inside the correct folder on your PC.

4 Go back to the Web site by pressing the Back button on the Explorer toolbar and enjoy it in its full glory.

Browser alternatives

Proof that there's more to life than Explorer or Netscape

MAC BROWSERS

BROWSER	RATING	FOR	AGAINST	DOWNLOAD FROM
ICAB	★★★★	Fast. Gets rid of irritating ad banners	Could support more features	www.icab.de
HOTJAVA	★★	Pretty showcase for Java technology	Slow; somewhat unstable	java.sun.com/products/hotjava/3.0/
INTERNET EXPLORER	★★★★	State-of-the-art browsing on the Mac	Can be memory-hungry	www.microsoft.com/Mac/IE/
LYNX	★★★★	Blazingly fast at fact-finding	If it isn't text, Lynx isn't interested	www.lirmm.fr/~gutkneco/maclynx/
NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR	★★★	It's almost as good as IE...	Doesn't display pages as prettily as IE	www.netscape.com

PC BROWSERS

AMAYA	★★	Great for those into Net standards...	...not for those who aren't	www.w3.org/Amaya/User/BinDist.html
ARACHNE	★★	It runs in DOS and is written by Czechs	A pain to set up	arachne.cz
CUSTOM BROWSER	★	Adds minimal extra customisation to IE	It's just IE with an ad in the top panel	www.custombrowser.com
HOTJAVA	★★	Pretty showcase for Java technology	Slow, though not as bad as on the Mac	java.sun.com/products/hotjava/3.0/
INTERNET EXPLORER	★★★★★	For the moment, the king of all browsers	Hard to fault, unless you really try	www.microsoft.com
LYNX	★★★★	The original text-only browser	If it isn't text, Lynx isn't interested	lynx.browser.org
MOSAIC	★★★	Good for developers	Feels old. Is old. Not updated since 1996	www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/SDG/Software/mosaic-w/
NEOPLANET	★★★★	Funky interface replacement for Explorer	Internet Explorer in new clothes	www.neoplanet.com
NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR	★★★★	Wide range of features for hardcore users	Doesn't display pages as prettily as IE	www.netscape.com
OPERA	★★★★	Faster than IE or Netscape	Looks absolutely horrible	www.opera.com
SURF MONKEY	★★★★★	Lots of fun – blowing up sites is great	Designed for smaller screens?	www.surfmonkey.com

*free 30-day trial version available

What all those browser buttons mean

Understanding the toolbar

BACK Clicking this button takes you back to the last page. Click it once and you'll go back one page, or hold to see the last 10

STOP If you decide that you don't want to view a page while it's loading, just hit Stop

FAVOURITES Pop-up window containing a list of your Favourite sites – or you can view them from the menu

HOME This button takes you to the page you viewed when you started your browser

PRINT Prints the page

MAIL Opens your email program

GO When you've entered an address, hit Enter or click here to go to the site

LINKS A quick shortcut to some of your favourite sites, which you can add to

FORWARD If you've used the Back button to move back a page or two, the Forward button should take you back again

REFRESH This makes the browser redraw the page on the screen – useful if you have stopped a page from loading

SEARCH This button opens Internet Explorer's search options where you'll find short-cuts to finding what you want on the Internet

HISTORY Clicking this button produces a list of all the sites visited over the past few days or weeks – so if you found a really useful page two days ago but forgot to add it to your Favourites list, you can easily find it again by looking here

EDIT If you have a Web page editor, you can edit a Web page by clicking here

RELATED SITES Launches the Explorer 'Alexa' plug-in which provides extra search options

Viewing your browser

1 TITLE BAR
Tells you the name of the site you're visiting and the program you're currently using

2 MENU BAR
The range of options you can use while navigating the Internet, including your Favourites menu

3 IE LOGO
Contains a link to the MSN home page, in case you're completely lost

4 ADDRESS
The address of the site you're opening, including the http:// prefix

5 GO BUTTON
IE5 feature: click to go to the address you've typed in (or hit the Return key)

6 LINKS BUTTON
IE5 feature: shortcut to the 'Links' option within your Favourites folder

7 WEB SITE WINDOW
The whole page you're opening, including ads and links to other sites

8 BANNER ADVERTISEMENT
Click here to visit the service advertised in this small banner

9 INDEX
What you'll find on the site. Click on an option to enter it

10 TEXT LINKS
Move your cursor to the underlined text and you'll be able to open the relevant link by clicking on it.

11 EMAIL FEEDBACK
Most Web sites allow you to send them questions and enquiries.

12 DOWNLOAD DATA
This space tells you what Explorer is doing – or which site it could open when your cursor passes over a link

JARGON BUSTERS

DOWNLOAD Retrieve a page or file from across the Internet
HOME PAGE The initial page of a site you see when you connect
HTTP Short for HyperText Transfer Protocol The way your browser pulls in Web pages
WEB PAGE Web sites are divided up into 'pages'. Each page contains a link to another page, building up a 'web'
URL Short for Uniform Resource Locator. A technical term for a Web address
WWW Short for World Wide Web – found in addresses

Email

Still not set up your email program? Follow our guide to Outlook Express

What is email?

Email is a way of sending messages around the Internet. While early programs could only handle plain text, most can now carry pictures, and even video clips and sound.

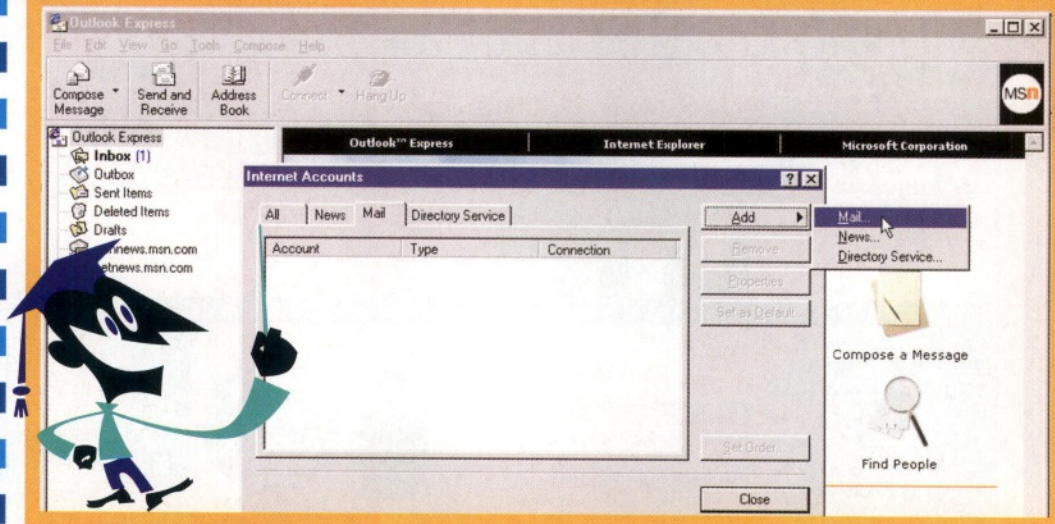
So why should I use it?

➤ It's a lot cheaper to email a friend than to phone them long distance.
➤ It's delivered almost instantly – there's no seven-day wait if you're emailing someone on the other side of the globe.
➤ You can keep in touch with family and friends, even while they're away on business or holidays – they can visit a cybercafé and check their mail from there.
➤ Many companies now rely on email as a means of communication because it's much faster and cheaper than ordinary or 'snail mail'.
➤ You can have information on your favourite subjects – whether it's fishing, the stock market, or a TV programme – delivered to your mailbox every day.

Okay, so how do I use it?

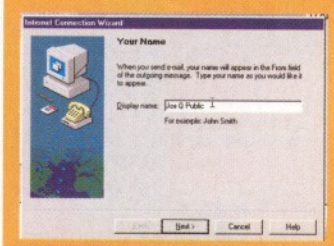
There are lots of email packages, but the one most widely used is Microsoft's Outlook Express. If you've bought a PC in the last two or three years, or you've downloaded Microsoft Internet Explorer for either Mac or PC, you'll already have Outlook Express installed. Our step-by-step guide shows you how to configure the program, create an email message, send it, and then read through the mail you've been sent.

1 Getting started with Outlook Express

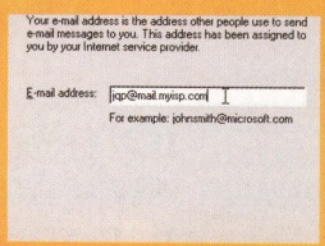


1 From the Start menu on your desktop, click Programs and then Outlook Express. If you are asked where you want it to store messages, select the pre-set or 'default' folder. The folder is kept in the Program Files folder on your hard drive.

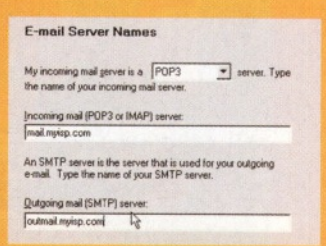
2 Once Outlook Express has loaded go to the Accounts box from the Tools menu, and click the Mail tab shown in the picture on the left. This will show you any mail accounts you already have set up, and allows you to create a new one. For the purposes of this exercise we are going to create a new email account. Next, click Add, and select Mail.



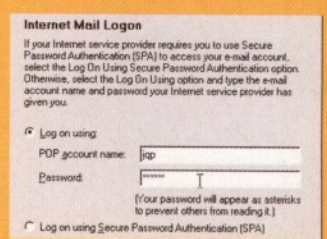
3 The Internet Connection Wizard will now guide you through the steps you need to take. First, enter your full name.



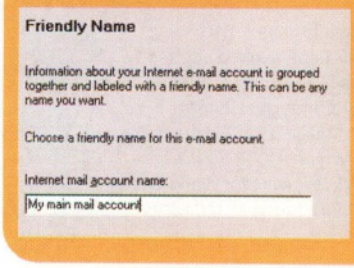
4 Type in your email address. This will have been given to you by your Internet service provider or ISP.



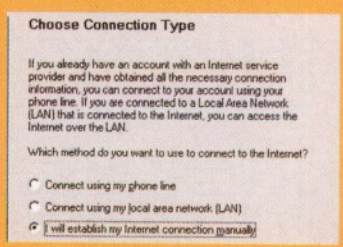
5 Enter the names of the email POP3/IMAP server in order to get incoming and outgoing mail. Call your ISP's helpline if you're unsure.



6 Type in your email address – just the part before the '@' sign – and your password. Again, your ISP should have given you these details.



7 Outlook Express asks for a 'friendly name' to give to your email account. We've called ours 'My main email account' for simplicity.



8 Outlook Express can automatically dial into your ISP for you, but it's probably best to connect manually. You can use Outlook offline, writing and managing your mail and then connect in order to send and receive messages. Choose the 'I will establish my Internet connection manually' option.

MORE EMAIL HELP AND ADVICE @ www.thenetmag.co.uk/helpbutton/

- ★ Creating an email address book
- ★ Email etiquette
- ★ Filtering your email messages
- ★ Sending pictures and files via email

BEGINNER'S TIP

Add a 'signature' to your messages. A signature is like a calling card appended to the bottom of your email message. It might contain your email address, full name and phone number. To make one, go to the Tools menu in Outlook Express, choose Options and select Stationery and click on the Signature button. Type in the signature text you want to appear at the bottom of each message.

INTERMEDIATE TIP

Often, you'll want to pass a file to someone as part of your email message. This is known as 'attaching' the file, and is supported by most email packages. Remember that a large file will take longer to send. Compressing it using a shareware package like WinZip on the PC will shrink it, but the receiver the file will need a copy of the same program to re-expand it – so check before you send.

ADVANCED TIP

You can set up several different email accounts. Outlook Express will check each one for new mail when you go online. This is useful if you have separate work and personal email accounts. To add extra accounts, go to the Tools menu, select Options and click on New Account. Go through the 'Getting Started' steps again below, entering the new settings.

EMAIL OPTIONS If you don't want to use Outlook Express, try these alternatives for size

EUDORA LIGHT

www.eudora.com

A very popular, free email package. Includes lots of great features. Doesn't support reading news-groups, but copes happily with 'rich content email' – mail that includes sound, images and so on.

✔ **Lots of features**

✘ **None**

HOTMAIL

www.hotmail.com

A Web-based email program. Gives you a free email address, and can be accessed from any computer with a Web browser. Can also check email from a non-Web-based account.

✔ **Accessed from any computer**

✘ **You need to be online to read or compose mail**

EUDORA PRO 4.0

www.eudora.com

Commercial bigger brother to Eudora Light. Has all the features of Lite, but also allows you to check your mail from several different accounts easily.

✔ **Supports multiple mailboxes, spellchacker, email filtering**

✘ **It'll set you back nearly £30**

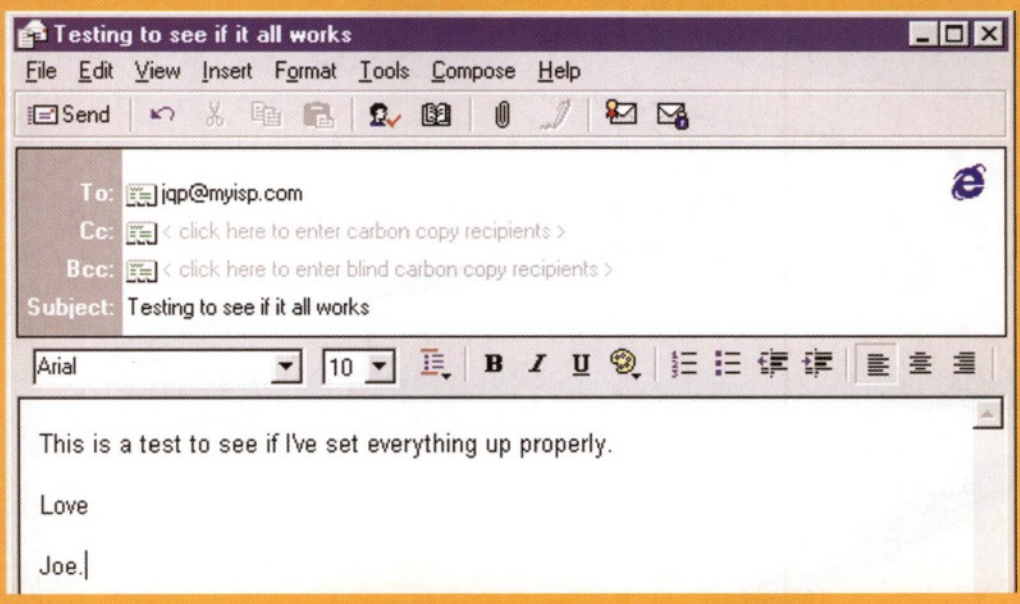
OUTLOOK 98

www.microsoft.com Commercial bigger brother to Outlook Express. Includes an address book, to-do list and calendar, all of which link very elegantly in to the email section of the program.

✔ **Integrates well with address book, diary and scheduler**

✘ **It'll set you back around £125**

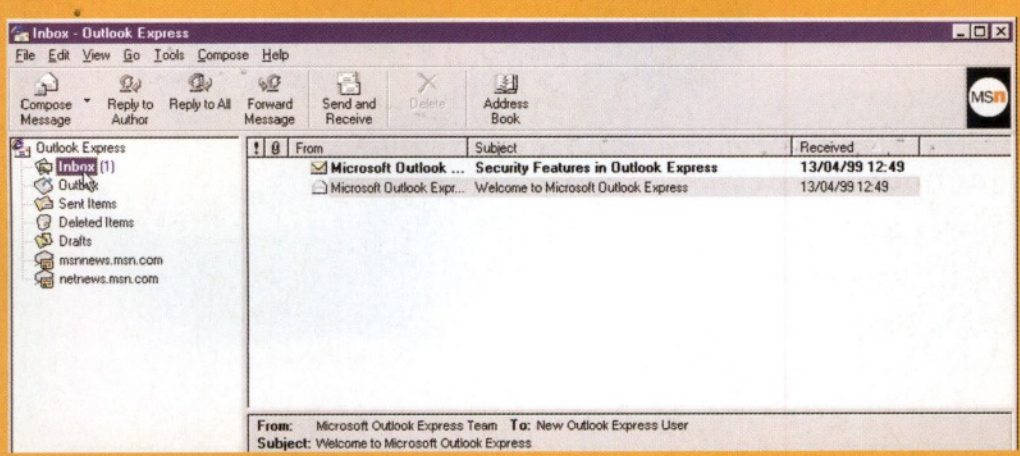
2 Composing your first email message



COMPOSING A MESSAGE

To create a message, click 'Compose Message'. If you click the small arrow just to the right, you will see that there are several pre-defined graphic message templates. But for now, just click on the button itself. Type your own email address in the 'To' field – you'll send an email to yourself to check that everything is working correctly. Enter a subject, for example 'Test Message', and in the body area just type a short message. From the File menu you can click Send to send your message now if you're online. Alternatively, if you're working offline click Send Later. This allows you to create more messages if you want, and have them ready for sending when you're ready to log on to the Net.

3 Sending, receiving & reading email



SENDING & RECEIVING MAIL

To send and receive mail, connect to the Net, then click the Send and Receive button. This will check for mail and download any new messages, at the same time sending any outgoing messages you have created. Once the program has stopped receiving mail, you can disconnect from the Net if you wish, to save phone costs. Click on In Box to the left of the screen to access the messages you have received. Click on the message to read its contents.

▸▸ www.autosport.com
for.racetrack.enthusiasts
AUTOSPORT
For the motor racing news updated throughout the day, live radio reports and personal e-mail, visit the new Autosport website.

Online chat

There's always some like-minded person who's ready to have an online natter. Here's how to hook up with them

What is online chat?

Online chat lets you communicate with others – often in real time. In other words, you type in comments, send them over the Net and they're seen almost immediately. And you're only paying for a local phone call – even if the person you are 'talking' to happens to be on the other side of the world.

What does it let me do?

- 'Chat' with friends and relatives in other countries without running up massive phone bills.
- Join in an online discussion with an expert on your favourite subject.
- Ask a celebrity questions during a moderated 'conference'.
- Talk randomly to people on the other side of the world.

DON'T PULL THAT FACE ROUND HERE

'Smileys' are a way of including some indication of emotion in your messages. They are useful when, for example, you are making a joke and you want to be sure that the person at the other end of the line realises you're not serious. Hang a relevant smiley on the end of your sentence by typing in the relevant characters – but do try not to over-use these things. To 'read' them, just turn the page 90 degrees to the left ;-) OK? Here are the four most used smileys:

- :-) The original smiley. Indicates a joke, or just a happy person!
- ;-) Wink
- :-o Shock (an open mouth)
- :-(Unhappy

BEGINNER'S TIP

Don't register your details unless you really want to

Often chat software will ask you for your name, and sometimes other info. Be wary about giving this; you don't know what they'll be used for.

INTERMEDIATE TIP

Be careful out there

If you are looking for romance online, be careful. As you would with press ads, let someone know where you're going if you meet up.

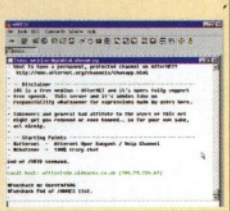
ADVANCED TIP

Go one step further

If text chat seems a bit flat, try 3D chat, where users take on a 'persona' and actually walk round chat rooms. Try ***www.thepalace.com*** for starters.

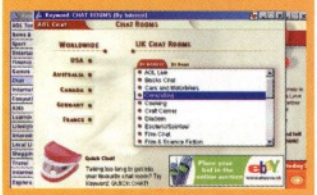
What kinds of Internet chat can I try?

There are several programs and methods for chatting online. It can get a bit confusing, so let's look at the main options

TYPE OF CHAT		FOR & AGAINST	CHAT LINK
LIVE ON A WEB SITE This kind of chat takes place within the window of your browser on a Web site. Everything you type in can immediately be seen by the other people viewing the Web page – and everything anyone else types in can be seen by you.		**FOR** Easy to use; no extra software required to run it. **AGAINST** Works on someone's Web site, so the subject will be dictated by them and private chat is unlikely.	***www.talkcity.com*** Online community where you can talk on various subjects, including romance and current affairs.
MODERATED SESSIONS Moderated chats are 'supervised' by a chat room host. In other words, you type in your message and a person sitting at the other end of the line decides whether or not to allow your comments or questions to be displayed. This is the norm for celebrity chats.		**FOR** Discussions are sensibly run. Plonkers may be screened out. **AGAINST** Only take place at certain times because they require a moderator to be present on the site. Censorship...	***chat.beeb.com*** The BBC's celebrity chat service with daily visits from the network's top stars.
REAL-TIME USING EXTRA SOFTWARE Software such as AOL's Instant Messenger and ICQ allow you to chat with other people in real time – either a group of people together, or one-on-one. You don't use a Web browser; dedicated software takes care of everything for you.		**FOR** Instant response; you can chat privately to one person. **AGAINST** Requires extra software; some firms don't allow this to be installed on their PCs, so you may not be able to chat at work.	***www.aol.co.uk/aim*** ***www.icq.com*** Chat one-to-one with your friends in real time on the Net. AOL's Instant Messenger and ICQ software are two of the most popular.
IRC This is Internet Relay Chat. It's a way of talking to many people at once using special software. IRC software can be a pain to use, however – it was, after all, modelled on Citizens' Band radio.		**FOR** Useful, technical chats are often held on IRC channels. **AGAINST** Software is difficult to use; IRC users can be impatient with newcomers.	***www.mirc.com*** Although it can be tricky to get used to, mIRC is the best software for IRC chat. ***www.ircle.com*** IRC client for Macs

CHAT ROOMS

Want to have a natter about some of the subjects you've read about in *the net* this month? Try these

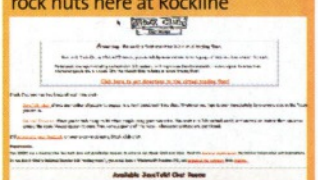


www.aol.co.uk
There are chat rooms for various subjects if you sign up to AOL

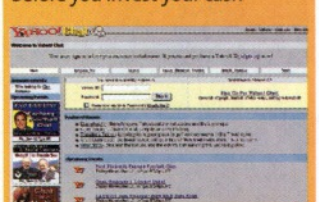
About.com
Chat about the places you should and shouldn't go at ***About.com***

www.chatsports.com
Have a heated debate about your fave sport, from hoops to hockey

Rockline.com
Are you ready to rock?Then head-bang with the rest of the rock nuts here at Rockline



Stockclub.com/chat/index.html
Chat with those in the know before you invest your cash



chat.yahoo.com
If the millennium is making you fret, go to Yahoo! for a comfort chat before 2000 arrives

So that's what Big Brother looks like

Candid cams

Setting up a Webcam in *the net*'s office might seem like an act of great vanity but, in reality, we just want to show you how easy it is

Web lore has it that the origin of the Webcam came from thirsty academics taking their coffee breaks. Academic A, feeling the urge for a well-earned cup of freshly brewed, set off to the kitchen and put the coffee on. Being an academic with ologies and everything, he knew a watched pot never boils so, while the beans brewed, he popped back to the office for a crafty ciggy and a look at the racing pages. When he returned, however, academics B, C, and D had helped themselves. So for A, mug in hand, coffee there was none.

Those ologies weren't for nothing though, and the answer to the coffee conundrum proved to be a simple camera, trained on the pot, and feeding back its images as a series of digital snapshots carried over the network to the academic's computer. He could check the coffee at any time; the Webcam was born.

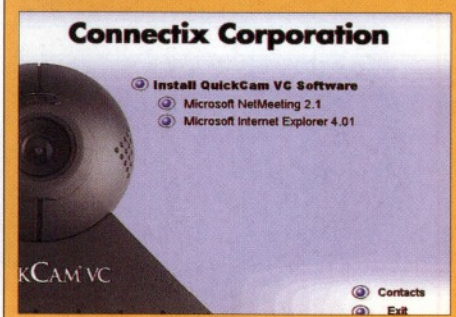
Outside the wacky world of academia, people had very different ideas of what the average human wants to study via a remote camera. As modems got faster and cameras cheaper, lenses mushroomed all over the world and now academics, culture vultures and good old-fashioned pervs have all the low-resolution, low-quality video feeds their hearts could desire.

INSTALLATION

For those wanting to join the Webcam revolution, it has never been easier. The advent of the USB port has meant that installing your own camera is a question of plugging in one cable to the USB,

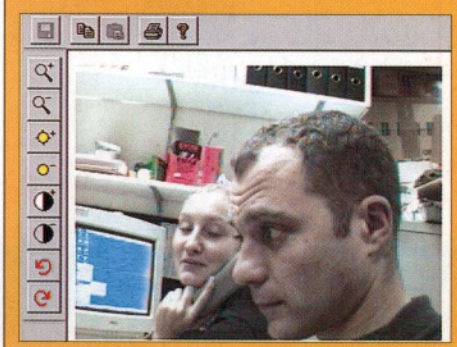
WHAT CAN THE CAM DO?

Set-up and use based on the Connectix QuickCam



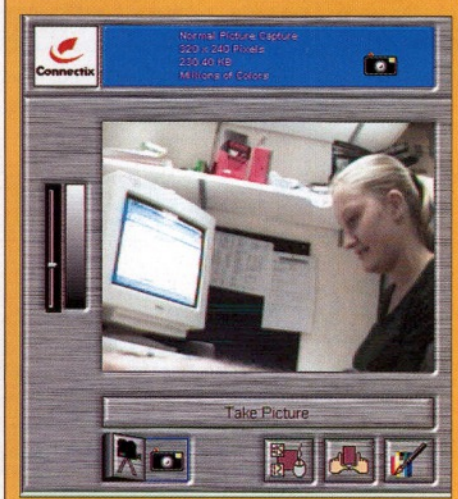
1 Installing it

It really is dead simple. Once you've plugged in the Webcam, just follow the set-up wizard, which begins here



2 You're on

Once you've got your cam attached, play around with the positioning. There's plenty of fun to be had just leaving it running but you can also capture images and sound – and then email them



3 Snap

You can set the Webcam up to either take a snapshot when you hit the record button (at bottom of window), or else to take a short video clip, which you can then compress

4 Store your snaps

All your captured shots are kept in the filmroll window, click on any one to bring it up to full-size

5 Send it to friends

Record your clip, compress it, record an audio message (you'll need a microphone for that) and email – all from this window

WORDS: STEVE SHIPSIDE; PICTURES: STEVE ORINO

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installing the software, and deciding what to point your camera at. No USB? No problem. The Logitech QuickCam VC (RRP £69.99 – see ***www.logitech.com***) we installed here was a parallel port version and the only extra complication is that, as well as plugging into the parallel port, there is also a cable that connects to the keyboard socket (your keyboard piggybacks into a socket on the connection). It really couldn't be simpler.

RECORDING

At its simplest, the cam provides a stream of video into a window. Capture buttons give you the option of taking single frames as pictures, or recording a short clip of video. You can then compress the video so you can email it. Webcams are usually silent, but when you choose a clip you can separately record an audio message that will run with it.

VIDEOCONFERENCING

Once you're bored of sending greetings to your nearest and dearest, it's time to look for more practical applications of Webcams. Videoconferencing by Webcam is simple and cheap – although you don't get the best quality in the world, and given the state of what some of us see in the mirror its desirability is questionable – all you need is a Webcam at each network end. You'll also need a separate microphone if you want sound, and the so called 'whiteboard' software that enables you to work on a shared space will fast repay the effort it takes to set it up.

The Web is packed with cams taking a shufty at the pet iguana

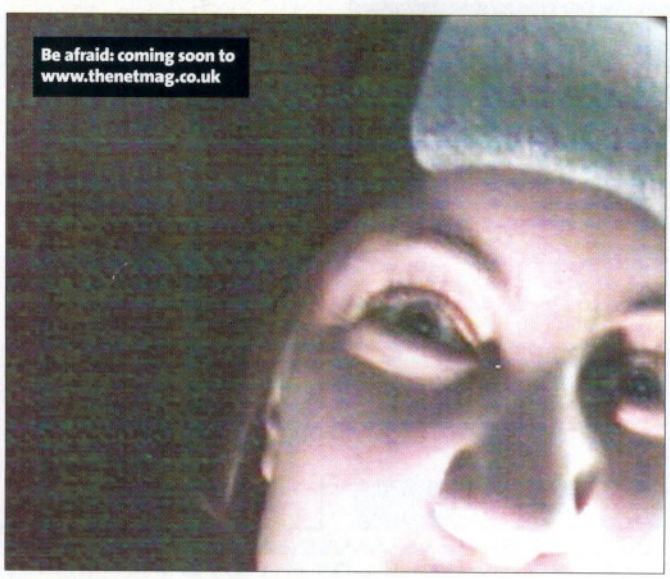
Of course, a true Webcam isn't a Webcam at all unless the subject of its beady eye is beamed up to the Web, but even that's straightforward. You'll need a Web page and a host server, but Webcams simply send their data in FTP (file transfer protocol) to a given page. Consequently, linking a cam to your site is blissfully programming- and even scripting-free.

VANITY CAMS

This only leaves the last stage in the process to consider – what you're going to gaze at. Many people, for reasons variously sad and sordid, choose themselves. I was once invited to a West London hotel with Webcams at bed level in every room. Leaving out the more spectacularly voyeuristic examples, me-myself specials include the now-famous Jennicam – a cam trained on the daily life of a young woman in the US. A few tips if you're going to train the cam on yourself – for whatever reason. Make sure you've got a simple background, but not white (it pixellates and glares), with a strong but diffused light on yourself and nothing moving around behind you (lock the cat in the toilet). Would-be videographers can learn more from ZDTV's Netcam Network at ***www.zdnet.com***.

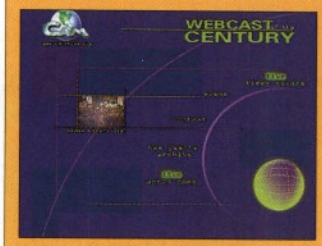
Some serious applications include a video baby monitor, or even a simple way of keeping an eye on a pet while at work – but this also means that the Web is stuffed with images from cams taking a shufty at the pet iguana or yak. Security cams are also available for cheap surveillance; take a look at those cams which lie dormant until something moves across its field of vision.

Uses of Webcams are limited only by imagination – proof of which is shown right alongside here.



What's on the Web tonight?

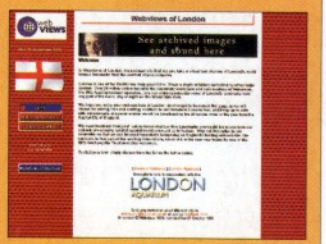
Nothing on the telly tonight? Fret not, you don't need cable and satellite to expand your viewing choice, just drop in on one of these – there's a worldwide Web of wonder out there



newyears.earthcam.com/home.html, billed as webcast of the century, all part of ***www.earthcam.com***

Fancy lifting your soul to a higher plane? Why not do as the Japanese do and take a look at Mount Fuji: ***www.sunplus.com***

Old Faithful spouts every 90 minutes – but why go there and hang around for it when you can catch it live at ***www.nps.gov***



Seen the sharks at London Aquarium? ***www.webviews.co.uk***

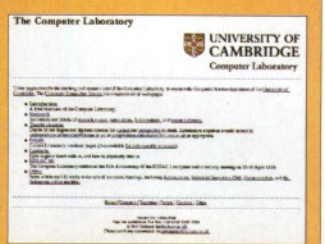
Or the llamas at Yellow Wood Llamas farm in Indianapolis? ***www.ywl.com***

Nessie, anyone? ***www.lochness.scotland.net***

Look in on Susukion, the nightlife district of Sapporo, Japan ***www.hbc.co.jp***

Check out the turtles doing their non ninja mutant thang at a hatchery in the Cayman Islands. ***www.turtle.ky/webcam.htm***

The original, and still one of the few family-rated girl sites is Jennicam at ***www.jennicam.org***



And, of course, the coffee-drinking academics (in Cambridge) at ***www.cl.cam.ac.uk***

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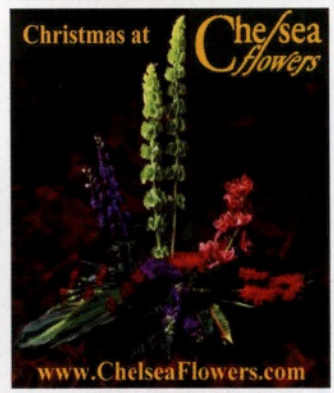
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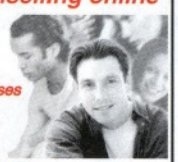
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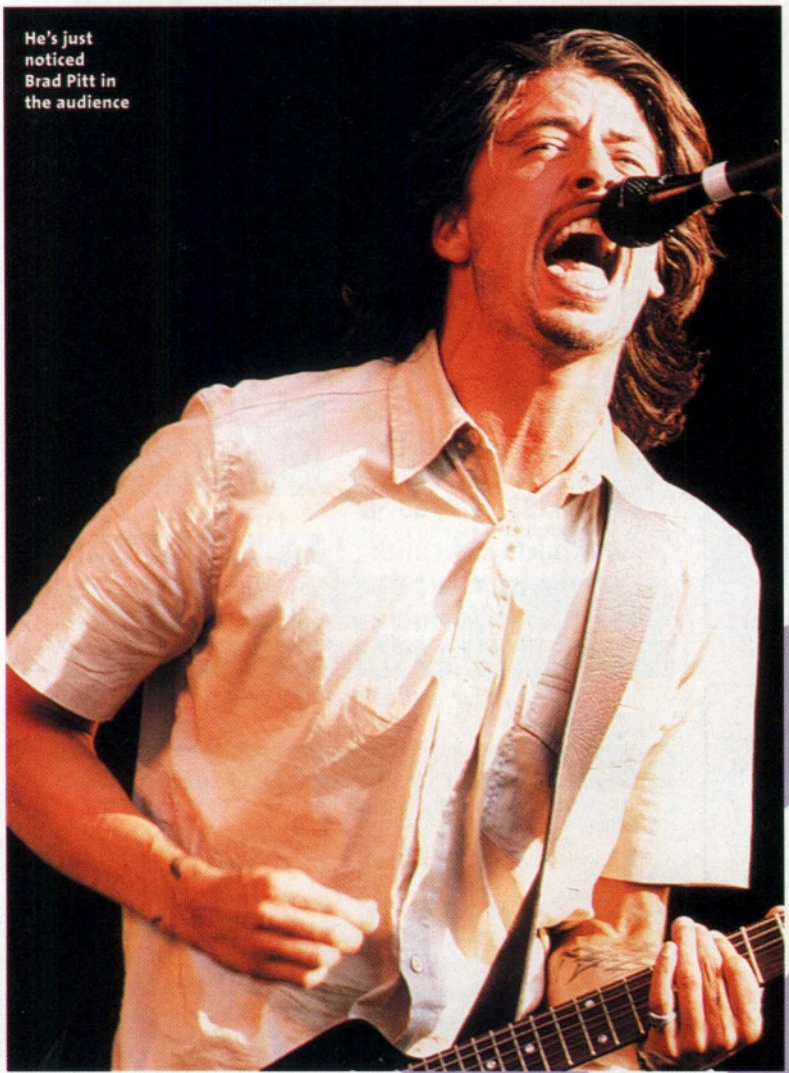
DAVE GROHL

The Foo Fighters frontman and former Nirvana drummer comes clean about his Brad Pitt phobia



PICTURE: REX FEATURES

How often do you use the Internet?
Far too much. I use it more for booking train tickets or plane tickets or news than anything else – you know, useful stuff as opposed to 'so and so ate my balls'.

What do you look for in your ideal site?
I love anything that brings artists who consider themselves some sort of demi-god crashing down to earth. So any kind of studio diary I really love – like artists that are considered so very talented, you wind up hearing about how they piece together their record like it's a messy collage rather than some stream of consciousness genius. That's kind of fun.

Are you a conscientious emailer?
That's probably the thing I use my computer the most for. It's an easy way for me to correspond with all of my friends. When I'm out on tour or whatever, I'm really bad when it comes to postcards and I'm really really bad when it comes to writing letters. I'll write a draft then edit it, then edit again. And after I've written the damned thing three or four times I'll decide it's ridiculous and I don't need to write a letter at all – I'll just email them instead and have done with it.

Are you a fan of chat rooms?
No. I think chat rooms are weird and I consider them like a bathroom wall – people just writing whatever they think of at that moment. They're full of bad gossip, lots of 'F--- you' and 'Eat me' bullshit. So no, I guess I'm not.

What does the future hold for the Foo Fighters?
Work, work and more work. This new record we have, *There Is Nothing Left To Lose*, I'm way more excited about than anything I've ever done in my entire life. We spent months on it and there isn't a single thing I want to change. And right now we're about to go on a European tour to promote it. Yeah, I'd say life's real fun at the moment.

The Foo Fighters' album There Is Nothing Left To Lose is out now.

DAVE'S BEST OF THE WEB

1 FOO FIGHTERS HOME PAGE

www.foofighters.com

I check our Web site just to see what's going on with the band. Right now everything's really hectic so I need something to tell me where we're going next.

2 MIX MAGAZINE ONLINE

www.mixonline.com

I've recently built a recording studio in my basement so I need guidance as to the best equipment and construction methods available. It's so very easy to build a studio – I mean, if I can do it, anyone can. I also bought some second-hand equipment.

3 TENACIOUS D

www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/5534

Tenacious D are this great comedy band on American TV that I don't think are very well known over in the UK. They're this two-man lounge act but all they sing about is what they'd do if they made it big. Their Web site's pretty cool.

4 SUPERGRASS

www.supergrass.com

I think that band is pure genius. Their music is far more advanced than most others and should be appreciated as such. I use their site just to keep up with what they're doing and check out when they're next coming over to the US.

5 MR SHOWBIZ

mrshowbiz.go.com

I try to see as many movies as I can so I check out the reviews here to make sure I'm not gonna watch anything with Brad Pitt in it. That guy is just horrible and I think a film like *Fight Club* would have been much better without him.

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